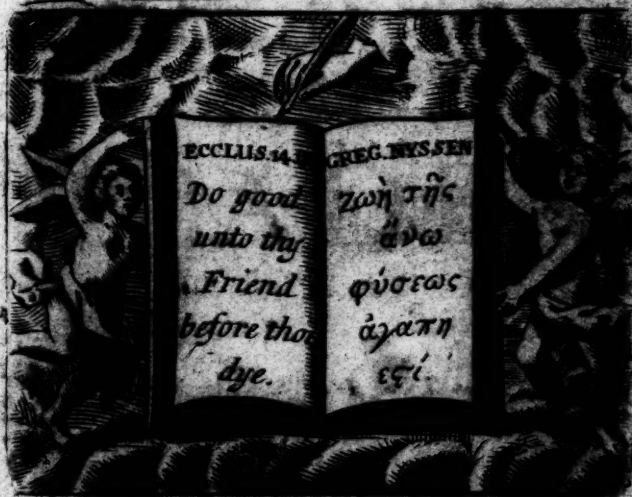


ADVICE TO A FRIEND.

By SIMON PATRICK, D.D.
now Lord Bishop of ELY.



The Sixth Edition with Additions.

L O N D O N.

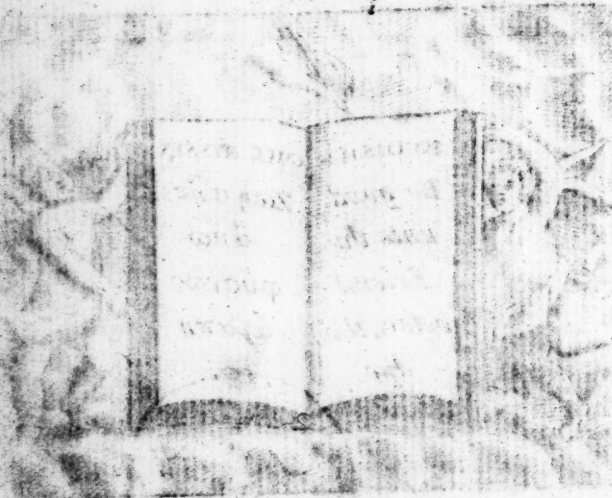
Printed for Luke Meredith, at the Star in
St. Paul's Church-Yard, MDCXCVI.

ADVICE

TO A

TRIED.

BY SIMON LARSON, D.D.
Now published in
English and French.



THE GREAT GOSPEL BY SIMON LARSON, D.D.

NEW YORK

Published by the
American Bible Society

16019 Main

AN
Advertisement
 FROM THE
PUBLISHER
 TO THE
READER.

Reader,

I Have nothing to say either of this Book, or of its Author: But only desire the Reader, if he like the Counsels which are here given, for the promoting and better ordering of Devotion, and for the preserving of a pious Soul in peace and chearfulness, that he would be so kind and faithful to himself

The Publisher

as to follow them. And the hope I have, that after a perusal, they will invite him so to do, makes me secure, the Author will not be displeased to see that exposed to publick view, which was at first intended only for a private Persons use. For if the Advice be good, the more common it grows, so much the better it is; and it will not be the less mine, when it is gone into other hands.

Plato, I am told, calls Love, the Ornament of all, both of the Gods and of Men; the fairest and most excellent Guide, whom every Man ought to follow, and celebrate with Hymns and Praises: And what is there in which we can better express and declare it to others, than in communicating to them, that which we hold in highest esteem our selves? It was that which first produced this Treatise, and from thence it comes abroad.

*That which the same Person saith is the Father of delights, of mirth, of whatsoever is graceful and desirable, was the Parent of this Book: And therefore let it be accepted with the same kindness where-
with*

to the Reader. T

with it was writ, and is now Printed. Let all the faults (if you find any) be overlookt with a friendly eye; and do not discourage so excellent a Vertue as Friendship (to which we owe the best things in the World) by severe and harsh censures of any thing that it produces.

But I need not, I think, be solicitous about this: the pious design of the Book being sufficient to give it protection, if it cannot gain it approbation. It hurts nobody, and therefore may pass it self with more safety; and it offers its service to do every body good; which me thinks should be taken kindly, even by those who stand in no need of it. As for those who shall make use of it, and find any benefit by it; they will complain perhaps only of the Author's thriftiness, and wish he had been more liberal of his Advice. And so, it's like, he would, if he had not consulted his Friends ease more than his own; and considered rather what would be useful, than what would make a great show. You will take a wrong measure of his kindness, if you judge of it by the bulk of the Book;

The Publisher, &c.

which was purposely contracted into a little room, that it might be a constant Companion, and as easie to carry in mind, as it is to carry in ones hand. And let the defects of it be what they will, they may be supplied out of one of the Rules, you here meet with, if you please to make use of it: which is, to chuse a good Guide; from whom you may receive further Advice in any thing that is necessary for your Progress in Piety; or for the settling your Conscience in peace.

And that we may none of us ever want such a faithful and skilful Person to conduct us, and that we may receive a benefit by these and all other good Counsels; let us heartily join in that Prayer to God, which is the Collect for this Day, and add it often to the ensuing Devotions.

Leave us not, we beseech Thee, destitute of thy manifold Gifts, nor yet of Grace to use them alway to thy Honour and Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Barnaby's
Day, 1673.

E A

A

A
TABLE
OF THE
CONTENTS.

A *Preface, describing the condition of a
Christian in this World.* P. I
Who is advised therefore,

I.
*To make the Unseen things of the other
World familiar to him ; and to be so sen-
sible of them, that they seem the most sub-
stantial beings.* P. 14.

II.
*And then to represent to his mind as feelingly
as he can the incomparable Greatness of
that invisible happiness.* P. 31.
The way to do this. P. 34.

A Table of the Contents.

III.

Next to this the truest notions of God and Religion are to be treasured up. p. 58.
In which the mighty vertue of sincere love to God is set forth. p. 63, &c.

IV.

Which must not transport us to charge our selves with too many or too long exercises of Devotion. p. 84.

V.

In which exercises we must also carefully distinguish between spiritual and sensible consolations. p. 95.

VI.

And observe what it was that first begat devotion in us, and drew us to the love of God and Goodness. p. 109.

VII.

It is very profitable also to keep a Register of the extraordinary thoughts and effusions of our Souls, in their best temper. p. 121.

VIII.

Frequent Meditation likewise is exceeding useful, p. 129.
The

A Table of the Contents.

The way to make it awakening. p. 130.

IX.

*Constant chearfulness of Spirit will dispose us
for it, and for all that is good.* p. 142, 143.

X.

Good Company will much cherish it. p. 151,
152.

Especially the society of a well chosen Friend.

The advantages of Friendship. p. 154, 155,
158, &c.

XI.

*It is necessary also to maintain a strong faith
in God's good Providence; which governs
in all affairs.* p. 173.

XII.

*And to receive as often as we can the Commu-
nion of Christ's Body and Blood.* p. 181.

A Prayer when one cannot Communicate. p. 191.

XIII.

*When we are much indisposed, to advise with
our Spiritual Physician.* p. 198.

XIV.

*And in our best moods to exercise an holy jea-
lousie over our selves.* p. 208.

A Table of the Contents

But tempered with an humble faith and confidence in G O D's Goodness. p. 210.

To all which we should add frequent Meditations of Death. p. 222.

This will make us observe the former rules better. p. 225, 226.

But if nothing will do, it is then best to exercise a great deal of Patience towards ourselves. p. 232.

Reasons for it. p. 233.

How acceptable it is to G O D, see p. 241.

The Conclusion. p. 251.

AD-

ADVICE TO A FRIEND.

My Friend,

MAN bears some resemblance, and may not unfitly be compared, to a Diamond or such like precious stone; whose darker parts confess that it is of the earth, but the brighter look as if it had borrowed some rays from the Sun or Stars. He is a substance (I mean) consisting of a terrestrial Body, and a celestial Spirit: with his Feet he touches the Earth, but with his Head he touches Heaven. Though the Neighbourhood knows whence his Body came, and remembers the time perhaps when it lay in the dark Cell of his Mother's Womb; yet his Soul doth absolutely deny that it is of so mean extraction: And, casting its
eyes

eyes upward, calls to mind its high descent and parentage; and takes it to be no presumption to affirm that, *we are the offspring of God.*

He cannot therefore but find in himself propensions and desires, not only different from, but contrariant to each other. For since two Worlds meet in him, and he is placed in the confines of Heaven and Earth, his will must needs hang between two widely distant goods: the one propounding pleasures to his body, and the other to his mind. And though once there was a time when these two preserved such a friendship, and gave such due satisfaction to one anothers just interests and inclinations, that they did not break out into an open War; yet this peace lasted not so long, as to let us feel the blessings and happiness thereof. But that part whose kindred and acquaintance was in this world, apprehended the first occasion, that offered it self, to quarrel with the other, whose native countrey was not so visible through walls of flesh; and denying to consent unto it, plainly rebelled and entred into a state of hostility against it. This it might do with the more ease, because two parts of those three into which the Soul is ordinarily divided, stand very much affected to

to the Body, and its concernments. The *Desiring* part, that is always ready to run to any thing and embrace it, which hath the appearance of a bodily good: the *Angry* part, that is no less forward to shun, and to make defence against, whatsoever seems to be a bodily evil: to the *Rational* is committed the direction and government of these; which that it may manage aright, it is to maintain a constant conversation with an higher good, to which all the lower desires and passions ought to be subordinate and subject.

These are handsomely compared by a noble Greek Philosopher to the Three Ranks or Orders of Men, that are in a City: The *Servants*, the *Souldiers*, and the *Magistrates*. The first of which are to do all the work, and make such provisions as are necessary for its support: The second serve for a guard to protect and defend it from all dangerous assaults: And the third sits in Council, pronounces Judgment, issues out Orders, makes Rules, and gives direction how both shall be employed. But so it falls out, that as the Slaves and the Souldiers sometimes prove
mutinous

mutinous and unruly, and combining their forces together make themselves masters of the Conservators of the true peace and liberty: so have the violent desires that are in us of enjoying a sensual good, and of avoiding all outward evils, and inconveniencies, grown to such a head-strong and unbridled humour; that they have overtopt reason, and refuse to hearken to the authority, and to obey the dictates of our understanding.

Many ways have been tryed both by God and Man to reduce them to a good agreement again: But though all fair faction hath been offered, and is allowed, to the lower part, it would not yield to a surrender of that power and sovereignty; which it hath usurped: As a company of Factionous people that strive for superiority over their Governours, when they have compassed their designs and possessed themselves of the throne, are with more difficulty suppressed, than they were before kept in Subjection: So it is with the multitude of mens furious lusts and passions, now that they have dethroned reason, and advanced themselves into the seat of Government. Having tasted very strongly of a sensual good, and felt the sweetness (as they take it) of being absolute; they are
 loth

loth to be denied the licence which they have so long enjoyed, and will by no means grant any obedience to be due to an higher power. God was pleased therefore to manifest himself in our flesh, to countenance the claim and assert the title of our Mind and Understanding; and by shewing its undoubted right of Government, to take up this controversie, and put an end to these sad contests which have hapned to the ruin of Mankind. In the Lord Jesus there appeared such an absolute and constant dominion of the Spirit, as in the first *Adam*, after his Fall, there did of the Flesh. And he came not only to give us a glorious Example, to overawe all unruly motions in us by his divine Authority, and to inspire our feeble Spirit with some courage, by his great and precious promise of eternal life: but to comfort us (by his Death, Resurrection, and Exaltation at the right hand of the Majesty on high) with the hopes of a mighty power from above, to aid and assist us in our Christian conflict with all unreasonable desires. This he actually sends into our souls, to give them sufficient force and ability, for the doing of their duty, redeeming themselves from this slavery, and recovering their ancient rights and liberty.

And

And in all those who attend unto his holy Counsels, and receive his Divine grace, and are renewed and led by his good Spirit, there appear many happy tokens of the Souls Victory; and they are daily winning new conquests over the flesh with all the affections and lusts thereof. The heavenly good seems so great in their eyes, that they cannot (upon any terms) think of submitting their Souls any longer, to attend wholly or chiefly upon the pleasures and satisfactions of the lower Man. The Mind is furnished with such right opinions, the Will is become so tractable, and compliant with their resolutions, the Affections grown so subject and obedient to the orders and commands of both; in short, God and his will is so seriously loved, and their Spirit strives so earnestly after the ardors and fervent Devotion of love; that the ancient Government is again restored, its lost authority, rights and royalties are manifestly recovered, and they live in good hope to be more than conquerors, over all temptations from the World the Flesh, and the Devil; aspiring to an humble rejoycing, glorying and triumph over all these enemies.

But notwithstanding all this, these Men remain still both flesh and spirit. The Body is not destroyed, the goods wherein it de-

lights have not altered their nature, its habitation is not removed from their neighbourhood; and it retains the same inclination to them, and they are often remembering it of its forepast fruitions, and, which is worst of all, the Soul cannot presently recover its perfect health and soundness; but feels the maims and bruises that it got, when it was formerly beaten down and oppressed by them. Hence it comes to pass that, for some time at least, there are many motions made for a revolt; and every thing in the World is tampering with the heart, to corrupt and bring it over again to their party; and the mind it self, in some fits, almost wearied with their importunity, may be ready to lend half an ear to these solicitations. There is not such a perfect peace established, but there will be some endeavours of the fleshly part to resume its power, and get into its hand its pretended liberty. Yea, by the violence of many outward accidents, the mind may sometimes fall into a dream, and be tempted to muse whether there be sufficient reason to prefer those future and unseen goods, before present enjoyments: The Will may begin to bend it self to some civil carriage and fair compliance with the flesh: the Affections, being much wooed and complimented,

mented, may feel themselves in danger to be inveigled; or the heat, at least, and liveliness of Devotion may, in such a condition, be much abated and impaired.

And indeed it is not to be expected that the Body should go along as nimbly as the Spirit would have it, towards a good with which it is not acquainted. All that the Mind can do, is to take a very great care, that it move it self with as slow a pace towards that good to which the other is most inclined. That we love these outward things cannot be blamed: but it will require much diligence to keep our hearts from doting on that, for which we naturally have no small affection. That we hold some acquaintance with them, can by no means be avoided: but that we grow not too familiar with them ought to be our prudent care, and cannot without some difficulty be prevented. There will some kindneses pass between us, and we cannot deny the Body these sensible pleasures: but that our Souls should thereby suffer themselves to be undermined and their interest betrayed, there is no small danger. For while the Good of the Body is near at hand, and the Good of the Soul is at some distance, while that which is near seems great, and that which is remote seems small, while the one is pre-

sent

sent and the other future, while things present call upon us and we must earnestly call for things future, while the one is always before us and the other comes but at certain seasons, while the one is of old and the other but of a late acquaintance (we having been bred up with the one and being but brought to the other, the one coming first, and the other thereby prejudiced) as long, I say, as there are these plain advantages on the one side, if we use not attentive diligence to give the Soul just and true information, they will prevail with it inconsiderately to slight the far greater advantages on the other. Just as you see sometimes a wild-headed and unthrifty Heir, though there be no comparison between his future inheritance, and a small sum of present money, yet, for the pleasing of a violent passion, sells the reversion of an estate, which after some years, would make him very rich and happy : So do Souls that are not serious and deliberate, heedlessly resign, for meer trifles, their apparent title to such things as are of most importance to their true and lasting felicity. Though the possessions of the other world be as far beyond all our enjoyments here, as this World is above nothing ; yet because these things here are present, and because they are ever
soliciting

soliciting and offering themselves to us, and because they entertain our desires with pleasure, and because they put us to little pains to give our selves the fruition of them, they are wont to prevail with sleepy and careless minds to purchase them, though they part with all their interest in the other World, as the price of the bargain.

From hence there grows a necessity of that precept of vigilance and watchfulness, which our Lord Christ hath given his Soldiers, lest through subtle insinuations, or frequent and violent assaults, this old enemy get up again, and establish it self in a new and more grievous tyranny. *Augustus* deservedly reprov'd the folly of *Alexander*, who as the story goes, was troubled in his mind for want of imployment after the conquest (as he imagined) of the whole World; for he should have considered (said that great Emperour) that there is no less pains and wisdom requisite to keep a possession, than there is to win it. We must not think that we have ended our warfare, when we have reduced the flesh to some terms of obedience and peace; but the strongest Soul will find it necessary to keep a constant guard: or else that enemy, whose weakness consists in our watchfulness, will succeed in its endeavours to get all into its hands once more,

more, and settle it self in that Throne from whence it was so happily depos'd. Whensoever we grow remiss, the experience of all the World tells us, our Souls lose as much in a week as they have been acquiring by a whole years labour. To fall down is very easie, and we tumble apace: but we cannot climb the hill without difficulty, and by little steps and slow motions we advance towards the upper World and the celestial blessedness; which will cost us much patience and unwearied industry before we approach it.

But what will keep the Mind, may you demand, from this remifness? what remedies can you prescribe to preserve a feeble spirit, from being stupefied and lull'd a sleep sometimes with these gaudy Poppies, these fair and soft enjoyments which appear every where, and continually surround us? who is able to keep a perpetual watch, and never take a nap? In such a long work who can chuse but be sometimes weary? When I consider my own infirmity and the Enemies strength, my natural love to these worldly things and their restless importunity, the length of my journey, and my aptness to be tired, and especially when I see so many seeming Champions that have been overcome, so many that did run well

who

who have grown slack or retired, I am afraid, may your heart say, that I shall never hold out to the end, and maintain the ground stedfastly on which I stand.

And indeed it must be confessed, that the Spirit is not always alike able to make a valiant resistance and courageous opposition. But what through the defect and disorder of the bodily instruments which it uses, and what through strange occasions and unusual accidents that it meets withal to surprise it, and what through the strength of some one object either of joy or grief or such like, that seizes mightily upon the imagination, and what through its own timorousness which makes the enemy grow confident, and what through the want now and then of those delectable motions of God's good Spirit, and those heavenly consolations wherewith it hath been transported; it may fall into some listlessness and dullness, and grow so faint, that it hath but little heart to maintain its Christian Warfare.

But yet for all this you ought not to despond nor be quite discouraged at the thoughts that you may possibly one day find your self in these unhappy circumstances. You are not left without a Remedy, either for the preventing of the fall of your Soul
into

into this condition; or for the delivery and raising of it up, should it chance to slide into it; or for its safety and preservation, that it may receive no harm whilst it lies therein, and can for the present meet with no means to rid it self of so great a burthen. This little Book comes to bring you some relief, and lend you some support and aid in such a case. It hath no other business, but to give your Soul the best assistance that mine can afford it for its security: that whatsoever assault may be made upon you, whatsoever weaknesses you may feel in your self, and whatsoever advantage the Enemy may make of them, the flesh notwithstanding may never be able to draw you back again under its power; but your Spirit may stand fast in its pious resolution, and come off with Victory and Triumph at the last.

And let the Divine Spirit of Wisdom and Grace, I humbly beseech the Father Almighty, so guide my Pen, that your Soul may receive no less benefit by the reading of these Papers, than mine doth contentment in the writing of them, and that the Good they do you may be proportionable to the Love from whence they come. Amen.

I. And

I.

AND in the first place let me advise you to bring your self into as great an acquaintance and familiarity as ever you can, with unseen and spiritual things; and to make your mind so sensible of them, that they may seem the most real and substantial beings. You easily discern how suitable this Counsel is to the foregoing discourse; and you can tell your self how much of our listlessness and want of spiritual appetite proceeds from hence, that these outward things press continually very hard upon us, and make us feel that they have a being and a solid subsistence: but the other rarely touch us with any force, and so appear as if they were only in our fancy. Our Soul seems to us, in our careless thoughts, as if it were but a breath, or a thin vapour: But our Body we perceive to be a massy-bulk, of whose concerns we are therefore very apprehensive. The Divine being, though the cause of all others, seems but like a shadow; on whom our Soul having no fast hold, it is no wonder that we rather catch at those things which we can grasp, and feel to have some substance in them. The report of immortal life and bliss in Heaven comes to us
like

like a common story, of which there is some probability, but no certainty; and that inclines us to close so greedily with the enjoyments of this life, which make more strong impressions on our body, than the other on our Spirit. The glass through which we look upon this lower World, makes every thing we desire appear exceeding great; nay multiplies and increases it to vast dimensions: but when we cast our eyes upward towards our heavenly Country, alas! things appear there (as if we had turn'd about the perspective) so little, so remote, so like nothing, that we can scarce discern them, or retain any remembrance of them. We have a kind of opinion and half perswasion concerning these inward and intellectual objects, but we have a sense and full apprehension of our outward enjoyments. Now though opinion may govern us, and we may follow it while there are no considerable impediments to oppose it; yet when any difficulty arises, or something crosses our way to which we stand very much affected, it will soon submit it self and leave us to our new inclinations, because it is but an *opinion*. We must confirm our Souls therefore in a *full belief* of those spiritual things: which thus differs from a bare *opinion* of them.

The one is grounded only upon probable reasons, or on good reason but half considered and feebly assented unto : the other upon clear and manifest evidences, well digested and fully entertained. So that the one leaves us weak and wavering, because it leaves us half in and half out of the arms of Truth : but the other makes us firm, constant and unmoveable, because it puts us compleatly and intirely into its embraces.

At those times then which are so favourable, as to let your mind be free and unclog'd, spend some of your retired thoughts in the company of immaterial beings ; and approach so near them that you even feel and handle them, and remain perswaded they are no less real than those which you see and hear and touch with your outward man. By which means they will infinitely more engage your affections and tie your hearts unto them, than any thing else can do ; because of the vast disproportion which every one acknowledges (supposing their existence) between them and all that you love in this sensible world.

1. Think first of all, that your Body is but the clothes and garments of your Soul, and that this indeed is the man. And undress your self in your own thoughts, strip your self of these robes, and conceive that
you

you are only a naked Spirit. This you can do; and thereby you will both make your Soul think more of it self, and you will likewise plainly prove it is quite distinct from your Body: in whose Society though it live, yet is not of its lineage, but of another nature and original: For nothing can think it self not to be, since by its very thinking so, it proves that it hath a being. But we can quite put off all thoughts that we have this Body hanging about us, and the Soul can think it self to be what now it is, though it look not through these eyes, nor speak with this tongue, nor write with these hands, nor have any other thing about it but its own thoughts: And therefore it is not such a thing as this Body, but some better and more noble Substance. It is that which tells you that you have a Body. If you believe it, you have reason to believe withal that it self is some other being, of more force and longer continuance: because you can now think you have cast off your Body and conceive it lying in the dust, your Soul still remaining as it is, full of these and other such like thoughts; but you can never think you have no Soul, because even by that conception you prove that you have, and shew your self to be a thoughtful thing.

18 *Advice to a Friend.*

2. When you have thus therefore discoursed your self into some feeling of your Soul, think in the next place very seriously, that whatsoever you clearly apprehend by this, though it be perceived by none of your outward senses, yet is no less real and certain than what you use with them. Disbelieve your eyes, and think that your ears bring you a false report, rather than doubt of any thing which your mind doth plainly and distinctly perceive. Though you cannot but yield an assent to the relation which any of your senses make you, yet since the mind is the more excellent Principle, and it hath a most certain existence; give the greatest credit to what it affirms, when none of them can afford you any evidence.

3. And then you will presently find that your mind asserts nothing so strongly, as the being of a God, without whom it could not be. Perswade your self therefore as confidently of him, as you do of that which your eyes behold. Though your eyes see him not as they do the Sun, yet say to your self my Soul doth; which gives as sound an evidence on his behalf, as my eyes do for the Sun. That great Light, and all the rest of those Globes of Fire, which I see in the Skies, declare him as clearly to my mind,

mind, as they do themselves to my outward Sense. I cannot think of them, nor of my self, nor of any thing else in this great World, but a Divine-Being presents it self before me; by whose incomparable Wisdom and Almighty Goodness they were at once produced, and set in this beautiful and useful order, in which I behold them. Exhort your self therefore to look about you as often for this end, as you are apt to do for other little purposes, that you may see God in this goodly Temple which he hath built himself for his own glory. Set your Soul in that Divine Presence, which fills all things. Open your Ears, listen to the wide World, and hear (as Gregory Nazianzen excellently speaks)

that great and admirable
Preacher of his Majesty.

† μέγαν, θαυ-
μασόν † μεγα-
λειότητα αὐτῶ
κήρυκα. Orat. 43.

Is it possible, as Athanasius well reasons, to come into a great City, consisting of a Multitude of Inhabitants of different sorts, great and small, rich and poor, old and young, Men, Women and Children, Slaves, Souldiers, and Tradesmen, and to see all things ordered so handsomely, that every one of these, though opposite in their inclinations, agree and conspire together for the common good, the Rich not grieving the Poor, nor

the strong oppressing the weak, nor the young rising up against the aged ; Can one possibly, I say, behold all this, and not conclude that there is a wise and powerful Governour there, though we see him not, by whose Authority they enjoy this happy concord ? Why then should we not draw the same Conclusion from the sight of this great World, composed of divers contrary Beings, moving several ways, and to distant ends ; but making as good harmony all together, as the various strings of a Lute, whose sweet Musick coming to our ears, proves there is some excellent Artist, (though hid from our eyes) by whom they are tuned and touched ? *Confusion is a sign of anarchy ; but order demonstrates a Governour.*

*Orat. contra
Gentes.*

4. If then there be a God, and you feel your self a Being that can subsist and enjoy it self, if he please, without a Body ; excite in your Soul a most passionate desire to be so happy, that when it quits the place of its present abode, it may approach nearer to his blessed Majesty, and have a clearer sight of his surpassing glory. Put your self in hope also that his Divine Goodness, which hath planted in you such strong inclinations, and filled you with such desires, will not let them want the pleasure of

of satisfaction. Look up above, and think that when your Spirit shall take its flight from hence, there is some other Company to entertain it in another World: whose acquaintance is far more desirable than the society of the dearest Friend we have here, who perhaps as soon as he hath gained our love, takes his leave of us, and goes his way thither. What comfort have we remaining in this, and other innumerable cases, but the hope of Immortality? Which is the only thing that can raise our Spirit above the pleasures and the troubles too of this mortal Body. This is our chiefest good on which we should set our heart. This is the inheritance to which we are born, (as *Lactantius* speaks) and for which we are form'd by vertue and piety: the only inheritance, of which we can be secure that we shall never be defeated. For all this World we must leave behind us: we can carry nothing away with us, but an innocent and well-passed life, and the hopes which accompany it. *He only comes to God rich and plentiful, and abounding in wealth* (as his words are) *whom continence, mercy, patience, charity, and faith, shall attend and convey into his Presence.*

5. To assure your self therefore of this great good, on which our principal strength

strength and comfort relies, consider in the next place, that your mind plainly tells you (and its testimony is indubitable) that God must needs be true, and that whatsoever he saith, ought immediately, without any hesitation, to be firmly believed. For as he can never be deceived himself, so we are sure he cannot deceive us.

6. Now God hath been pleased at last to speak to us by his own dear Son, as a voice from Heaven, and a World of mighty deeds have testified.

7. And seeing Jesus hath not only comprised in his Doctrine all the holy Wisdom, and all the Goodness that ever was thought or spoken of since the beginning of time; but hath likewise added a lively discovery of that state of good things, which the heart of Man naturally wishes, and longs for in another World:

8. And seeing, in the last place, God hath confirmed his exceeding great and precious promises of Eternal Life, by his Resurrection from the dead, and his Ascension into Heaven, and the sending of the Holy Ghost: You ought to perswade your self of the truth of these invisible things, and represent them so often to your mind, till they seem no less real and certain, than what you see with your Eyes, and feel with
your

your Hands: Nay, till all the pleasures and delights which the bounty of Heaven gives you in Friends, or any other good things here, seem but as shadows and faint Images of the better enjoyments which you expect hereafter. Those wise Men, who were guided only by the light of their own mind, made no greater account of them. And yet all the Philosophers of greatest fame were but little Children compared with Christian People, in the knowledge of this great Point, as *Eusebius* justly glories. *We*

are not left to gather this

L. 1. prepar.

truth (as another of the An-

Cap. 4.

cients speaks) from the weak conjectures

and imperfect reasonings of

our own mind, but we know

Laſtant. l. 1.

it from a Divine Tradition.

Cap. 8.

It is delivered to us by the Son of God, who hath put an end to all disputes, by coming from Heaven to us, with the Words of Eternal Life. Lay up his Words therefore most carefully in your heart, let them dwell richly and plentifully in you in all Wisdom; and possess you at once with a mighty sense of God, and of the dignity of your Soul, and of Immortality, and of the Joy of the invisible World.

The benefits of this Exercise are so evi-

B 5

dent,

dent, that I may leave you to relate them, when you have felt them. It will be sufficient for me to suggest to you, that the Heart must needs become by this means, very cold and dead to those earthly enjoyments, which were wont to bewitch and inchant it with their deceitful Pleasures. If the Soul be cloathed (as the Platonists fancied) with as many Garments as there are Elements, through which it passed as it descended into this Body, and if it be so muffled in them that it doth but fumble in its thoughts, and hath much ado to feel it self; hereby it will be able in some measure to divest it self of those thick Blankets, wherein it is wrapped, and throw off those heavy coats that dangle about its heels and incumber its motions, as it sets its Feet forward to walk toward the Father of its Being. It is no contemptible discourse which their Master makes concerning Felicity; which he

*Plato in
Phædone.*

rightly places in the contemplation and love of the Sovereign Good. How that no Man can attain unto it in this Life, by reason of the lumpish matter to which the Soul is fast tied and by reason of the multitude of worldly affairs which require our attendance; yea, and of the fancies and toys that will fill
our

our thoughts, do what we can. Whence he concludes, that either no Man shall be happy, (which he thinks is very absurdly affirmed) or he must arrive at his Happiness after he is dead. And if when we are dead (saith he) the blessed Time is come, wherein we may enjoy, as we would, that greatest good; then the nearer any Man approaches unto Death, the nearer he comes within the reach of his Felicity. If a Man therefore will with-draw himself from the World, if he will abstract his mind from sensible things, and take his heart from bodily pleasures, and turn himself into himself (which they judged, as the Holy Writers do, a kind of Death) he shall be in the beginnings of his Happiness. There I know, *My Friend*, you desire to find your self; and for that cause, I pray you learn thus to steal out of the company of Worldly things, which by hindring us from beginning our Happiness, would keep us in perpetual misery. Converse, as often as you can, with your nobler self; and contract an intimate acquaintance with those Divine Inhabitants which are lodged there. Grow into an high esteem of that unseen Power, which knows God and the Life to come; which thinks, and guides, and gives orders, desires,

fires, and loves and doth all things else belonging to this Life. And calling to mind continually its worth and dignity, and considering for what heavenly enjoyments it was designed; disdain to let it be condemned to so base a slavery, as to serve the Body only, and make provision for its Lusts and Pleasures. Rescue it from that thralldome, and assert its liberty: which is no such difficult undertaking; since rightly to understand it self, is sufficient for its safety and preservation.

And, to say the truth, the *necessity* of this Exercise is no less apparent than the *benefit*. We had need acquaint our selves thoroughly with those Spiritual and Heavenly Beings, and make them very familiar to us; because these outward Objects are so near us, and have gained such an interest in us, that, even when we are thinking of the other, they will busily interpose themselves, and are able in an instant to obtrude their Company, though then very troublesome, upon us. How oft do our minds turn aside to speak with them, in the midst of our Prayers? How will our thoughts be discomposed at the sound of a Bell, the creaking of a Door, the buzzing of a Fly, or some such weak and contemptible thing, that affects our Senses?

Senses? When we are bowed down before God, when our Hands and Eyes are lifted up to Heaven, how doth the Memory of Yesterdays enjoyments, or the fear of to Morrows troubles, (besides the thoughts of the present Days business) start up and interrupt us, we know not how, or on what occasion? The uneasiness of our bended Joints, the biting of a Flea, the prick of a Pin, some Word which we then speak, any fancy that rises up by the natural motion of our Spirits, will trouble our minds in our Devotion, and carry us away from God. It concerns us therefore very highly to work our minds into a stronger, and more delightful Sense of Him, and of all Spiritual enjoyments, since our familiarity with the other is so intimate; that the very least of them is in favour enough with us, to give us an avocation from this better Company, even when we are engaged in it.

In order to this, and all things else, you know very well how necessary it is to implore the assistance of God's grace, and to beseech his Infinite Goodness, that he will be pleased to represent himself, more clearly than you can do, unto your mind; and lift it up above toward the Happiness of the other World: Which you may do in some such words as these.

A.

A PRAYER.

O God, I believe that thou art, and that nothing could have been without Thee: who fillest all things, and art every where to be seen and felt by observant minds, who diligently seek Thee. Vouchsafe, I most humbly beseech Thee, to behold a Soul that seriously aspires towards Thee, and whom thou hast already filled with earnest desires to be united in Eternal Love to Thee; but is pulled down, alas! by this earthly body, and in danger to sink, without thy mighty aids, into too great a love of these lower goods, which here surround me. Draw near, O Father of Spirits; present thy self so clearly to me, and touch my mind with such a powerful sense of Thee, that it may be lifted up above all earthly things; and my heart may always incline towards Thee, and be possessed with a constant and most ardent Love of Thee.

Awaken in me, on all occasions, a lively remembrance of the worth and dignity of that Immortal Spirit, which thou hast breathed into me: And raise it up to as lively a belief, and hope of that Eternal bliss, into which Jesus our Lord is entered for us. Fix my mind upon that unseen felicity, and keep it in such a steadfast and delightful contemplation

plation of it, that nothing here on Earth may be able to tempt me down into an inordinate desire after it, and love unto it. O what glorious objects appear before me, (surpassing all that ever mine eyes beheld,) now that my thoughts are retired a little from this outward World! O what shadows do all things here seem, compared with those Heavenly enjoyments which thou presentest to me! What longings do I feel excited in my heart after Thee! What desires to be always with Thee, and to be filled still with a stronger sense of Thee! O thou who art the beginner and finisher of all good, be pleased to assist my holy endeavours to withdraw my mind, more and more from these sensible things, that it may have a clearer sight of its Heavenly Country from whence it comes, and whither it desires to return, and there live for ever. Preserve it thereby from the power of all temptations here; and enable me to prepare it, to be presented unto Thee by my Saviour adorned with that Faith, Purity, Patience, Righteousness, Mercy, and such like Heavenly qualities, as will dispose me for the Company of the Blessed.

I sigh to think, O my God, of the weakness of my mind, which is so easily distracted and turned aside in these my addresses to Thee. Pity me, good Lord; and knit my thoughts

thoughts and affections to a closer attendance on Thee. Help me to gather my mind into it self, and there to enjoy thy Divine Presence with less disturbance from this outward World. O that all things here may rather bring thee to my mind, than carry it away from thee! Dispose me so to observe the footsteps of thy Wise and Mighty Goodness in all thy Creatures that I may perpetually acknowledge thee; and then especially be born away far above all other things, in high admiration of Thee, and fervent affection to Thee, when I am thus prostrate in humble adoration of thy Divine Majesty. And when I am so feeble, as to wander after little things, even while I am presenting my self before thee, and offering my heart to thee; Help me to long the more earnestly after that happy state, wherein I shall with more steady thoughts and intire devotion, give everlasting praises to Thee. Amen.

II.

NOW that you may the better preserve in your Soul these ardent desires, and that they may not die for want of continual fuel to feed and nourish them, let me advise you, *My Friend*, in the next place, to represent to your self, as often

often, and as sensibly as you can, *the incomparable greatness of that invisible happiness in the World to come.* In which that I may assist you, as much as I am able, I will direct you to such an easie way of managing your thoughts that you may pursue this counsel with no great pains and labour. *Justin Martyr* observes in his Dialogue with *Trypho* the Jew, that therefore God laid such restraints upon that Nation, and forbad them, for instance, the use of certain Meats, the oftener to put them in mind of himself, even in the most common actions of humane life; and to make them remember they were under his Government, and subject to his Supreme Authority, which they were too prone to forget. And will it not be a great shame, if in these riper Ages of the World, the free use that God hath given us of all things, should not teach us as much as those restraints and abridgments of their liberty did them, in the infancy of Divine knowledge? Ill natures are taught most by their wants, but the good are best instructed by their enjoyment. Ingrateful People think of God, when he takes away his blessings from them; but ingenuous and thankful minds have a great regard to him, when his favours are in their hands. Nor do they
only

only think it a duty, but feel it a pleasure to reflect on the bounty of their great Benefactor: which endears the practice of it, and makes it still both more facile and more frequent. In so much that in the use of all these outward and carnal things, a pious heart may soon learn to turn its thoughts, and raise up its affections, to a more spiritual good, and nobler fruitions. Do you not observe how the Holy Ghost is wont to express the joys of the World to come, by such pleasures as are most acceptable to us here? What is the reason of it, if it be not in compassion to the weakness of our apprehensions; and to let us see that all bodily delights administer occasion for pious thoughts, and holy desires after diviner enjoyments? God would preserve us from sinking into a fleshly sense, by our daily conversation with, and use of fleshly things. He shows us how we may lift up our minds, even by those things which are apt to depress them; and take an advantage from these inferiour comforts, to climb up towards those higher satisfactions. Hence it is that the happy enjoyments of the other World are compared so often to the pleasures of *eating and drinking*, whereby our hunger and thirst is asswaged, and our bodily life supported. Yea,
to

to a *Feast* ; which is a more liberal entertainment of that kind , and is the meaning of that phrase in the Gospel, which represents *Lazarus* carried by Angels into *Abraham's bosom* ; placed, that is, in the uppermost Room at that Heavenly Feast, and treated as the noblest and most beloved guest. Yea, to a *Marriage Feast*, which being a time of the greatest joy, Men are wont to make the largest provision of good cheer, that their friends may rejoice together with them. And lastly to a *Marriage-Feast made by a King* ; a Royal entertainment, such as a Monarch would make at the wedding of his Son. All which may serve to provoke good minds to look up above such things as these, which are most enticing in this World, and to be so far from being swallowed up in sensual pleasures, as to give themselves thereby a more lively taste of that excessive joy which God will impart unto them, when they shall live with him, and be feasted by him in his Heavenly Kingdom. The like benefit you may reap from all other things which you converse withal ; and though the World will attract your thoughts to it , and imploy a great many of your hours ; yet you may draw at last something from thence, which will pay you well for the time

time which you have spent upon it. As for Example, when you look about you and behold the delightful Objects wherewith you are environ'd on every side, which present themselves continually to your Eyes, or your Ears, or your Taste, or other of your Senses, you may think with your self,

1. If God have provided such a multitude of pleasant things for the entertainment of this poor body in this present life; What are the joys and delights, which he hath prepared for my better part in the life which is to come? This is the World of Bodies, the other of Souls and Spirits. Therefore if this little Carkase, which is but as the Grass of the Field, be so well accommodated, if there be so many rare things in the Earth, and the Sea, and the Air for its refreshment and pleasure; What may I not expect hereafter for my mind in those Celestial, those spacious Regions which I see above? O the inconceivable felicity which is provided in the Paradise of God, for this more wide and capacious Spirit, which bears his own Image, and like himself, is to live for ever!

2. Again, you may think with your self, if there be such pleasure to be found in a Creature, O what is there then in the Creator of all? If the sight of the Sun, the

the Moon, the Stars, and all the rest of the beauties of this World be so glorious; What will it be to see my God? to be filled with that Wisdom which contrived, and with that Goodness which produced this vast, this goodly and comely Fabrick? If the melodies of Musick be so charming? O what an ecstasie of joy will it cast me into, to hear God himself say, I love thee, I delight in thee for ever? If the love of a true Friend do so much ravish and transport my Spirit! what pleasure is it that I shall feel, when my Soul shall love him as much as its most enlarged Powers will enable it; and know how much I am beloved by him? There is a delicious Meditation in St. *Austin*, to this effect; who thus speaks to G O D in one of his Confessions. "I love thee, O my

Lib. 10.
Cap. 6.

"G O D; thou hast smitten
"my heart with thy Word, and
"I have loved thee. Nay, the Heavens
"and the Earth, and all things contained
"therein, admonish me on every side, that
"I should love thee; and they cease not
"to say the same to all Men else, so that
"they are inexcuseable, if they do not love
"thee. But what do I love, when I love
"thee? Not the beauty of a Body; not
"the grace and comeliness of time; not
"the

“ the brightness of light (and yet, O how
“ friendly and agreeable is that to these
“ eyes !) not the sweet melodies of well
“ composed Songs ; nor the fragrant odors
“ of Flowers, or Unguents, or costly Spi-
“ ces ; not Manna ; not Honey ; not the
“ embraces of the dearest, and most lovely
“ person : these are not the things that I
“ love, when I love my God. And yet I
“ love a certain light, and a certain Voice,
“ and a certain grateful odor, and a cer-
“ tain food, and a kind of embracement
“ when I love my God ; the true light,
“ the melody, the food, the satisfaction and
“ the embracement of my inward man.
“ Where that shines to my Soul, which no
“ place can contain : where that sounds,
“ which no time can snatch away ; where
“ that scents, which no Wind can disperse
“ and scatter abroad ; where I taste that
“ which eating cannot diminish ; where I
“ cleave to that, which no fullness, no sa-
“ tiety can force away. This is that which
“ I love, when I love my God. And what
“ is this ? I askt the Earth, and it said, I
“ am not. I askt the Sea, and the Deepes,
“ and all living Creatures, and they answer-
“ ed, We are not thy God ; look above
“ us, and enquire after him, for here he
“ is not. I askt the Air, and all its Inha-
bitants,

“ bitants, yea, the Heavens, the Sun, Moon
 “ and Stars, and they confessed, We are
 “ not him whom thy Soul seeketh. And I
 “ spake to all things whatsoever that stand
 “ round about the Gates of my Flesh, say-
 “ ing Ye tell me that ye are not my God,
 “ but tell me something of him. And they
 “ all cried out with a loud voice, *He made*
us. Look therefore how great, how good-
 ly, how glorious, how beautiful and plea-
 sant we are; and he is incomparably more
 bright, more sweet, more harmonious,
 more filling and contenting than the whole
 World, which is but his Creature.

And having thus a little raised up your
 mind above all things visible, you may pro-
 ceed to a new Meditation in this manner.

3. If a Soul inclosed in this Body can
 see and apprehend so much of God; O
 what a sight of him shall it have, when it
 is freed from these Chains? If whilst we
 look out of these Windows of Sense, such
 a glorious Majesty presents it self before
 us; in what an amazing splendor will the
 Divinity appear, when there is nothing to
 interpose between us, and its incomparable
 beauty? If whilst there are so many other
 things to imploy our thoughts, he disco-
 ver so much of himself to us, What will
 he do when we shall be alone with Him,
 and

and seeing face to face, shall know as we are known? Is it not a Miracle to see so much light conveyed to us, through so little a hole as that of the eye? to behold so much of the Heaven and the Earth at once, and such a company of beautiful objects crowding in together at so narrow a passage without any disturbance or discomposure? O what an admirable pleasure then (as *Seneca* discourses with himself) will the Soul be surpris'd withal, when it shall come into the Region of light? when it shall be all surrounded with this glorious Body? when on every side, as we may conceive, it shall take in light, and be adorned and clothed with it, as with a Garment? And may we not with greater reason meditate on this manner, when we think of God the Creator of light, and of all those goodly things which it discovers to us? Ought we not to say to our selves; O what wisdom, what greatness, what riches of goodness is this which shews it self in all his works of wonder? What a World of things hath he comprised in this one little Being, which calls it self Man? whose mind is circumscribed, and yet extends it self beyond the limits of this sensible World? which remaining in this body, swiftly runs and takes its circuit,
and

and views all Creatures in Heaven and Earth? and united to these Senses, abstracts it self from them, and goes to the Father of Spirits, whom it meets with every where? Is it thus active, thus busie, thus capacious and discerning, whilst it is thrust up in such a close and little Room, as this poor Body, and shall it not be more vigorous, more piercing, more enlarged, when it is set at liberty from this imprisonment? It will then sure stretch it self to receive more of him; it will see him more clearly, and comprehend him more fully, and admire him with more improved and extended thoughts, and love him with a more ardent flame, and feel more of his Wisdom, more of his Goodness pressing in upon it, and filling of it with infinite joy and satisfaction.

4. Again, you may think with your self, if God bestow so many goodly things even upon the wicked, then what shall be the portion of the just? Do not the worst of Men possess great plenty of his blessings? Doth he not entertain them here with strange variety of delicious enjoyments? Are they not so liberally and abundantly provided for, that Silver and Gold and Jewels are theirs? and all Creatures in the Earth and the Air and the Water are pressed for their Service? O what Treasures,

C

what

what Riches of Glory, what excess of Joy then will God confer on those who are most dear unto Him? If he treat his Enemies in this manner, how sumptuously will he entertain his Friends? If he let such Rebels live in a Palace so stately, so richly furnisht, as this great World is, which he hath built for good and bad; what Mansions may we think are those, which are peculiarly prepared for them, who live in faithful obedience to him?

5. And think again, if God hath made this Building wherein we dwell so sumptuous, though it be to continue but for a time, O how glorious are those Mansions which are Eternal in the Heavens; If he hath bestowed so much cost on that which waxeth old, and shall vanish away, what are the Ornaments of that which shall never decay? Is not this very mortal Body which we inhabit very fearfully and wonderfully made? Is it not contrived with admirable art, and curiously wrought in the lowermost parts of this little World? O how beautiful then will that Body be which is from Heaven, and shall never be dissolved, but remain Immortal there? With what lustre shall we shine when this vile Body shall be changed, and made like to the glorious Body of Christ our Lord?

6. And

6. And cannot you easily make your self believe the inconceivable splendor of that place where God himself more particularly dwells, since he hath made for us so fair and goodly an Habitation? Heaven you know is called his *Dwelling-place*; and our blessed Lord calls it his *Father's House*, where there are many Mansions for all his beloved Ones. O how beautiful, how glorious, how full of Majesty must this needs be; seeing we, and other of his lower Creatures live in a World which is so richly adorned, and so fairly beautified both above and beneath? Do you not see how the roof of this Palace (if I may so speak) wherein we are, is all gilded with innumerable Stars? how the Floor of it is overlaid with wonderful variety of pleasant Plants and lovely Flowers? O how glistering, O how refulgent then is that place, may you think with your self, in which the Lord of Heaven and Earth himself is pleased, in a special manner, to reside? where he keeps his Court; where all the Angels minister to Him; where he shews the Greatness of his Glory, and where our blessed Saviour sits at the right Hand of the Throne of that Majesty on High?

42 *Advice to a Friend.*

7. And when was it that he brought you into this delightful Dwelling, so rarely furnish'd and richly adorn'd? Was it not as soon as you were born; before you could know to whom you were beholden, or could give him any proof of your love and fidelity? Think with your self then, and say, If God hath granted us such a World of good things by way of gift, O what is that which he will bestow, when he shall come to reward? If before we do our duty to him, I mean, he is bountiful, nay, opens his Hand so wide, and fills every living thing with good, though they cannot acknowledge him; what blessings will he pour forth, what liberality will he express, when he comes to recompence our faithful services, and give us according to our works? For we see that gracious Princes, who grant many immunities, and privileges to their Subjects, only because they are their Subjects, do not fail to raise and advance their good and valiant subjects, who have performed some noble acts in their service, to eminent Honours and High Places. Now since that which God will bestow in the Life to come, though it be a free gift, yet, is called a Reward and Recompence, praise and commendation, you may well think it will be very illustrious;

lustrious; when you consider how rich in mercy he hath been to us, before we could do any thing praise-worthy.

8. And you may consider again, how that excellent Princes, when they give rewards, are not wont to have respect so much to the Persons on whom they are conferred (who may be but mean, and of low condition) as to the greatness of their own Persons, by whom they are bestowed, whom it doth not besit to give any thing mean and below the Name and the Authority which they bear. From whence you may conclude, how inconceivably great that reward will be, which the Majesty of Heaven and Earth will honour us withal. If a Prince do but send his Charity to the Poor, it is not like one of us, but like himself; and therefore such will the favours of God be, which he intends to deal to all his Servants. Though they are but Servants, though they are but unprofitable Servants, and have done no more than was their duty to do; yet he will reward them like a King, like the King of all the World, like the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, who only hath immortality. He will feast and entertain them suitably to the excellence of his own Infinite Majesty, and not proportionably

tionably to the poverty of their Persons, or of their deserts.

9. For you may consider again, that it is the reward which the Lord Jesus hath received, to give us, for all his pains, and tears, and sweat, and blood. It is the purchase of the blood of the Son of God, the recompence of his obedience to the death; and therefore must needs be of great and inestimable price.

10. Nay, it is the glory of Christ himself, the same happiness which he enjoys; according to his own words, *The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, and enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*: and according to that of St. Paul, *We are Heirs of God, Co-heirs with Christ Jesus*; who is gone into the Heavens, as he told his Apostles, *to prepare a place for us*. To prepare a place for us, you may say? How long will it be a fitting? When shall we come to it?

11. Truly, from thence you may take some estimate of it; by considering the time you must stay and wait till your happiness be compleated, and that is till the Day of his appearing again unto Salvation. They are great things, which are long in preparing. And therefore the longer your Life is hid with God in Christ, (as St. Paul speaks)

speaks) the more glorious will it appear, when it shall be manifested. The longer your body sleeps in the dust, to the greater dignity shall it be raised. God will pay us (if I may so speak) principal and use, and all. The Treasure multiplies, the longer it lies in his hands. If he should give us our reward now, it could be but little: but it increases infinitely, beyond all our thoughts by being deposited with him, till the Lord Jesus shall come from Heaven, with all his mighty Angels, *to be admired in his Saints, and glorified in all them that believe.*

12. And now, in Conclusion, think with your self, what a pleasure these short and little thoughts have given you; how delightful that minute is, in which you have had a glance of your future happiness; and say to your self, If a small taste be so sweet, O what will the full draughts be, when he makes me drink of the Rivers of his Pleasure! Are not Men of Contemplation wonderfully transported with some few discoveries, which they have made, of the secrets of Nature? Are they not perpetually thirsting and seeking after more? Do they not spend their time and their estates in such enquiries, though they never hope to find out all? What would not these Men give, (were it in their power) if the earth,

or any other part of this World, would reveal all the Treasures that are hid in it? What a satisfaction would they esteem such a vast discovery, when some little scraps of knowledge are so surprising? The same you may think of the other World; and raise your Spirit by such Meditations as these, to expect an inconceivable Joy, when all the glory of that shall be opened, which now darts such chearful Rays of Light into your Mind. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, saith St. John, that we should be called the Sons of God. Beloved, we are now the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* What that will be we cannot tell: but we feel now how delicious it is to resemble him, though but a little, in his Wisdom, in his Goodness, in his Love and Charity, in his Meekness and Patience, and such like Heavenly Qualities: And if in a drop of Honey that distills from above, there be such sweetness, what satisfaction, what fullness of Joy shall we find, in an Ocean of Pleasure? If the Morning-star be so bright, then what is the Sun it self, in its greatest lustre? It is one of the Meditations of *St. Austin, O God, if thou dost such great things*

things for us in the Prison, what wilt thou do for us in the Palace? If thou grantest such solace in the day of our tears, what wilt thou give us on the day of our Marriage? When we shall not only behold Jesus in all his Glory; but live with him, and live with him for ever, and receive the utmost effects of his mighty love, and be preferred to sit with him in heavenly places, and have a Crown of Righteousness set on our Heads, which he the righteous Judge will give to all those, *who love his appearing.*

And is there not great reason, *My Friend*, that we should love it, and set our hearts on this, as the most desirable good; which so far surpasses all others, that they have no power at all to tempt us from it, while we keep in mind its incomparable greatness? Perswade your self therefore as strongly as you can, that Jesus lives; and that *because he lives you shall live also*; and that you shall live with him in inconceivable bliss, according to his gracious promises. Believe them heartily, fix them deeply in your Mind, and by such arts as these represent to your self, as sensibly as you can, how exceeding precious they are: for it is neither the certainty, nor the goodness, nor the greatness of any thing, but the lively faith which we have of it.

implanted in our Souls, that will make us seek and labour for it. If our faith be superficial, we shall be no more moved by it, than if it were a thing of little moment, or but a devised tale, and some idle fancy. You must settle in your soul therefore, I say again, an unmoveable belief of Christ's great and precious promises, and present them to your heart, that it may be affected with them, and value them according to their worth. Then you will not be unwilling to do, nor backward to suffer any thing, that he would have you. This will give you a great spirit and courage and joy in both. You will take a great pleasure in godliness, which hath such a recompence of reward. Nay, all the afflictions of this present time will seem inconsiderable, compared with the glory that shall be revealed. Can any heart think much to abstain a while from sinful pleasures, when he believes, nay tastes the pleasures, he shall shortly enjoy at God's right hand? Will not any covetous desires be content to be denied, when you see it is for a Kingdom, and a Crown of Life? Of what should a Soul be ambitious beside; whose desires are pitcht upon so noble a good, as honour, glory, and immortality with Christ? Who would not watch and pray unweariedly, that he may come to this
Celestial

Celestial Rest with the People of God ? Can there be any higher pleasure, than to lift up our mind to our heavenly Country, and to think of the happiness which there expects us ? In what can we better spend our time, than in meditating of the great love of God, which hath prepared such excellent things for those that love him ? It is a good thing sure to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto his high and holy Name. There can be no more delicious life than this, which will conclude in his everlasting praises. And suppose we must sometimes take up a cross, where is the mischief of it, what should render it intolerable, if we look at *Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross, and despising the shame, is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God ?* From thence he stretches forth his hands to call us ; there his Arms are open to embrace us ; and there he would gladly see us. Out of that glorious place he holds forth a Crown of Life to us, saying ; Follow me, and let none of these things dismay you. Behold the Majesty, wherein I am enthroned ; see the glory to which I am promoted ; Do not faint in your mind, nor be weary of well-doing ; but press on towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in me your Saviour.

There

There is nothing sure can hinder us, or pull us back, unless we cease to *look at Jesus*, and turn away our Ears from hearkening to his gracious Voice. For do you not see what power a worldly faith hath over Mens hearts? How fast one rides to take possession of an Estate, of which he hears he is left the Heir? How another sails through dreadful dangers, because he believes he shall arrive at a rich Country; which will send him home laden with precious Commodities at the last? Why should we think then the Christian Faith is less powerful, or fantasie that we are in truth indued with it, unless our belief of the other World have the same effects? Let it lay its commands upon all the powers of our Soul, and engage them to do their several works. Let it excite our minds, and our wills, and our affections, and our endeavours, to a constant pursuit of these Heavenly enjoyments; that we may know indeed, that we *believe to the saving of the Soul*. Look upon that Faith which was built on weaker grounds and lesser evidences, and darker promises. See how it wrought in *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and in the rest of the ancient Patriarchs: whose belief of the Word of God made them forsake their own Countries, quit all their possessions,

possessions, when he required it, live as Pilgrims and Strangers on the Earth, and depend meerly on the love and care of his never-failing Providence. By Faith they slighted the pleasures of Kings Courts, the Honour of a Throne, and the Riches of *Egypt*. By Faith they wrought Righteousness, subdued Kingdoms, stopped the mouths of Lyons, indured all reproaches and afflictions, would not accept of deliverance, and life it self, that they might obtain a better Resurrection. Now since the Christian Belief relies upon better Promises, a clearer Revelation, and stronger grounds of hope, by the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead; what a shame will it be, if we do nothing worthy the name of Men, much less of the Disciples of Christ, and of the Sons of God? To what cause can it be imputed, but because there is no Faith in the Earth, or it rests only in the brain, and floats in the imagination, but never descends to touch the heart and affections? Bring it down then, *My Friend*, and stir up your self to a serious and affectionate belief of the life to come. Spare no pains to consider, and lay to heart (that which is the greatest comfort of your life) all the glorious things which you read of in the Gospel of Gods grace; which Christ hath

hath sealed by his blood, and God confirmed by his Resurrection, and hath been attested by signs and wonders of the Holy Ghost, and by the Life and Death of a number of great Souls ; who have followed Jesus even to his Cross, and declared their belief of those things by sacrificing all that was dear unto them here, to win his favour in another World. Look often upon their constancy, upon their zeal, upon their contempt of Riches and Pleasures, and Life it self, when it came in competition with the will of Christ ; for whose sake they rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer, especially since he had assured them, their present troubles should work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And then in imitation of them you will put on their resolution ; and lifting up your Eyes to Heaven, will be moved to speak to this effect. “ O blessed
“ God, how much am I beholden to thee,
“ that thou hast shewed me such things as
“ these ! How much am I beholden to thee,
“ that thou hast inclined my heart to make
“ them my choice ! I would not be as I
“ was before, for all the World. Away
“ you frivolous temptations ; you vain de-
“ lights, you unprofitable labours : Never
“ renew your importunities, for I will not
“ hearken

“ hearken ; I tell you I will not listen to
“ you any more. I am resolved to proceed
“ in this holy course to the end of my days.
“ You will but make me meditate the more,
“ and pray the more ; and lay to heart the
“ more the love of my God : I shall but
“ fix my Eyes the more stedfastly on that
“ blessed place where Jesus my Saviour is at
“ God’s right hand. At his will I hold my
“ riches, my honours, yea, and my life also.
“ Let him dispose of them as he pleases.
“ And let it please the Lord of life and glo-
“ ry to accept of this most hearty oblation
“ which I make of all I have unto him. Let
“ it please him to strengthen me in my holy
“ resolutions, to open my eyes, that I may
“ still see more of that wonderful love which
“ he hath discovered in his Gospel, and to
“ accompany me with his grace, till I ar-
“ rive at his heavenly Court. O let his good
“ Spirit breath upon me, and carry away
“ my Soul in holy desires towards him. Let
“ it guide my course through this trouble-
“ some Sea wherein I am tossed : Let it
“ shine upon me, and prosper my endea-
“ vours : Let it bring me safely to a quiet
“ haven in eternal Rest and Peace.

These pious aspirations you may still pursue at the end of these Meditations, in some such Prayer as this.

A PRAYER.

I Praise Thee; I magnify thy Wise and mighty Goodness, O Lord, who hast made this great World, the Heavens and the Earth, with all things contained therein, to the everlasting Honour of thy Name. I thank Thee with all my Soul, for bringing me into it, and for advancing me so much above the rest of thy Creatures here below, that I see the glory of thy Majesty shining every where, and hear thy Name proclaimed and praised by all thy works of wonder. But above all I acknowledge thy bounty, with the most admiring thoughts, and the devoutest affections of my heart, for sending Jesus Christ upon Earth, to open unto us the Kingdom of Heaven, and to shew us the Glories of another World. O the exceeding greatness of that love which gave him to dye for us, and rewarded all his sufferings with a blessed Resurrection, and then translated him to Heaven, and appointed Him Heir of all things, and settled his Throne for ever and ever, on the right hand of thy Majesty on high. From thence he hath sent the Holy Ghost, to be witness of the fulness of his Royal Power and Love, and hath shewn himself sometime in Majesty and Glory above the Sun, when it shineth.

shineth in its strength; that we might hope in thee for the like Resurrection to a glorious immortality in the Heavens. No tongue can utter, nor heart conceive, what Honour, Glory and Peace, what joy and gladness of heart, thou hast prepared there for those that love Thee. But blessed, for ever blessed be the riches of thy grace, whereby I understand so much, as to feel most earnest longings in my Soul after a fuller sense of that, which thou hast made me taste and relish beyond all the pleasures of this life.

O raise and enlarge my Spirit unto clearer and more comprehensive thoughts of that supreme Blessedness. Thou who entertainest all thy Creatures with so much liberality; who causest the Sun to shine upon the good and the bad, and thy showers of Heaven to fall on the just and the unjust; deny not to satisfy the pious desires of a Soul, in whom thou hast excited an ardent thirst after its proper and eternal good. But enlighten the eyes of my understanding, that I may know more and more, what is the hope of thy Heavenly calling, and what the riches of the glory of thy Inheritance in the Saints, and what the exceeding greatness of thy power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of thy mighty power, which wrought in Christ, when thou raisedst him from the dead, and set him at thy own right hand in
the

the heavenly places. O lift up my mind to that high and holy place, where thou dwellest, and where Jesus is inthroned, and where the Angels and Saints continually behold and praise with joyful hearts, the Majesty of thy glory, and where our Lord hath promised all the faithful shall live and reign with him for ever.

Help me to climb up daily by all thy Creatures, on which thou hast set such marks of thy Greatness, Wisdom and Goodness, to the contemplation of that Celestial Bliss: And possess me with such a constant sense and desire of it, that nothing here may ingage my heart, which will indispose me for the happy company and society of the blessed. Assist me, good Lord, by such Meditations as these, to discern more and more the incomparable and surpassing Greatness of that Felicity, which thy Royal Bounty will bestow upon our advanced spirits and bodies, in the world of rewards and Recompences. Affect my heart more powerfully with it; and fill me with Love and Joy unspeakable and full of glory, when I turn my Eyes towards it. Stir me up thereby to prepare my self with diligence and care, by a lively resemblance of the Lord Jesus, for the day of his appearing: and to wait with patience for that blessed Hope, when I shall not see, as now, through a Glass darkly, but face to face; and be made compleatly

ly like him, by seeing him as he is. Enable me always to live upon this Hope, and according to it; that growing in all goodness, by a chearful obedience to his holy commands, I may be found of him in peace, and be so happy as to hear at last those gracious words of his; Well done, good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Amen.

III.

I Need say no more to excite one of your vertue to the frequent exercise of such Meditations as these, which are no less delightful than they are useful. Let me next unto this advise you to *study the truest notions of God and of Religion*, the love of which is the way to that transcendent bliss and happiness, of which I have spoken. As you must believe things unseen, and persuade your self thoroughly, that they are; so it is necessary you should inform your mind aright, what they are. And in particular look upon Religion as a most pleasant thing, and represent it to your self with a face as fair and beautiful as you can. If it seem cloudy, dark and melancholy, it will make you to be of the same complexion: But if it have a lovely and chearful aspect,

aspect, it will encline you always to smile upon it. The poor *Norwegian*, whom stories tell of, was afraid to touch Roses, when he first saw them, for fear they should burn his Fingers. He much wondred to see that Trees(as he thought) should put forth flames and blossoms of Fire: before which he held up his Hands to warm himself, not daring to approach any nearer. But as he you may be sure was happily undeceived, when he came not only to touch, but likewise to smell those innocent Flowers, which seemed to burn in his eyes: so will it be with us, when we come rightly to understand and feel the pleasure that Religion gives us; which at first sight, before we come acquainted with it, looks as if it intended to make us Martyrs, but not to crown us with any joys or contentments. As the Martyr said of the real fire, wherein he was covered, that it seemed to him, as if it were a Bed of Roses; so shall we say of true Religion, which we are afraid will scorch us, and prove too hot for us: Its flames are but the flames of love; and it makes us not lye down in sorrow, but in the most comfortable sense of the tender love of our dearest Lord.

Think with your selves therefore, when you go into your Closet, and betake your
self

self to your private retirements, I am going to God, my exceeding Joy, to my happiness, to my hearts delight. Welcome, beloved hour, which hast more of eternal life in Thee, than of time! Rejoyce, my Soul, that thou art among Angels now, and not among Men! Yea let my flesh be glad to become a poor Soul's Cottage, the Temple of the most high God! Look upon Prayer as that which brings down Heaven to you; and upon Praise and Thanksgiving as that which lifts you up to Heaven; and upon Meditation as that which is the bond of the two Worlds, and ties Heaven and Earth together. Yea let every other good Action seem a favour, rather than a charge; a recreation, rather than a work.

And then, for your notions of God, do not look upon him as a rigid and unmerciful exacter of your labours; but as a loving Father who is easily pleased, and makes a most gracious allowance for your weaknesses and unavoidable Impediments; and is ready to forgive your many oversights and frequent neglects. When we represent him to our selves, as exceeding angry at every little indisposition and dullness that seises on us, that very thought makes us more dull and indisposed; because we imagine that we shall never be
able

able to please him. Or if we deem him, though not implacable, yet much in love with revenge, and ready to strike upon every offence that we give him, I know no readier way to render his service a most tedious task unto us; because we shall go in perpetual fear of thunder-bolts hanging over our heads, and ready to fall down to do some mischief or other to us. As we ought to have a great and scrupulous care to avoid all that is evil, so we must believe, when we commit a fault against our will and design, that there is an Advocate with our Father, who is a propitiation for our sins. And when we look upon him thus, as one ready to forgive, that had rather do us all good than any harm, and desires rather to see his commands better observed, than the penalties, for the breach of them, inflicted; this will encourage us to address our selves with a fresh chearfulness to his service; and breed in our hearts a great love to him, which above all other things hath a most powerful hand upon our obedience.

The more you heighten your love to God, the more motion and activity will the heat of it give you: and the more you heighten his love to you, the greater flames will there arise in your heart to him. Just as you see the Sun in its nearest approaches
to

to us, when its beams are directly over our heads, produces a vigorous heat and life in all Creatures: but when it is in the Southern Countries, and looks upon us with an oblique aspect, is not able to make us warm by its rays: So it is with the Divine Goodness, which is the life and comfort of our hearts. If we think that he looks asquint upon us, and cares very little for us, we shall be cold and frozen, like so many dead Creatures, in our affections to him; but if we think his Face is towards us, and that his eye, and the light of his Countenance (as the Scripture speaks) is full upon us, that he highly favours us, and his heart is very desirous to pour down a world of blessings into us; it will make our Souls leap for joy, our love will spring up apace, and the odours of it will be like the smell of Spices, sweet both to God and to our selves. We love God commonly (if not always) in the beginning of our friendship with him, because of the good that he doth, or that we think he will do to us: and though afterward this breeds a strong inclination in us to love that most excellent Nature, from which all good comes, yet that Inclination will still grow stronger, by the continued thoughts of his kindness to us. And therefore this belief
is,

is, by all means, to be nourished and preserved in our hearts; especially considering that the stronger our love and inclination towards him grows, by frequent reflecting upon his love and good will to us, the more chearful and constant obedience shall we pay to him.

I have represented this so largely in another Discourse, (which you know very well) that it may seem unnecessary to add any thing to it here: But it will not be unprofitable I am sure, to recommend to you this one consideration more, That the hearty love of God (which naturally springs out of a stedfast and unmoveable belief of his love to us) is a thing so comprehensive and so powerful, that it includes in it all the means which are necessary for the accomplishment of our end; and contains the force of all those rules, helps and furtherances, which are commonly prescribed for the better observing of God's commands. Let me instance in these *Five* great Exercises, to which you are often exhorted, both in Sermons and good Books, for the preserving you in his Obedience: First, *To live, as in God's sight.* Secondly, *To pray continually.* Thirdly, *To watch.* Fourthly, *To depend on God for his assistance.* And, Fifthly, *To look for his mercy to Eternal life:*

Life : and plainly show you that they are all comprehended in Divine Love, and cannot be separated from it.

For the *First*, it is well known that this passion is not wont to let the Object on which it is fixed be absent from it ; but at whatsoever distance it be removed, love brings it near, and sets it ever before the eyes of him, to whom it is dear. And therefore if our hearts be full of love to God, we cannot be without his Presence, but shall live as in his sight : Or, to speak in the Language of *David*, Psal. 16. 8. *We shall set the Lord always before us.* Whatsoever we do, we shall think of him ; and consequently do it well and exactly : We shall study purity of heart, and the greatest clearness in our intentions ; because he sees us, and penetrates into our secret thoughts. There is no more easie observation than this, that nothing makes a Man so diligent, so curious, so circumspect, so decent and comely in all his behaviour, as to be continually under the eye of one whom he loves ; to whom he desires, every way, to approve himself. And it is as certain, that ardent Love makes a Person ever present to us, and will not let us be divided from him.

When *Phidias*, the famous Statuary, made the Image of *Jupiter Olympius*, one of the

D good.

64 *Advice to a Friend.*

goodliest that ever was, he could not forbear, but he must privately engrave upon his little Finger, the Name of one whom he dearly loved, in these Words; P A N-

TARCES IS FAIR. For
*Παντάρ-
 xns xgλός.* it was not *Jupiter* (saith *Clemens Alexandrinus*, from whom I have

this story) who was fair in *Phidias* his eyes, but the Youth whom he loved. The thoughts of his God could not put out of his Mind, the thoughts of him whom he loved better. If therefore we had such a love to God, as others have to the things of this World; the thoughts of them could not quite thrust out the thoughts of him. But still we should be apt to write (if I may so speak) upon the very Forehead of every earthly good, *God is most lovely: or, God is my exceeding joy; the Lord is my portion; O how amiable are his Courts!* or as an holy Man (who, it is said, could never get these words out of his mouth) *My God and all things.* Where he is, there, in effect, are all things; and where his love dwells, there he will be sure to be. We shall meet him every where, see him in every beautiful thing, and taste him, before we have done, in all the delightful enjoyments of this life.

2. And as it comprehends in it the practice

Office of making God present (which some Masters in Divinity have said may serve in stead of all other Rules, for the ordering of our life aright :) so it contains in it likewise the very spirit of *Prayer to God*; which all acknowledge to be not only a great part of a godly life, but a great help and furtherance to us, in all the rest of our Christian Duty. If by Prayer we understand, as some have explained it, the ascent, or raising up of the Soul to God, it is love only which continually aspires towards him, and carries the heart aloft, from other things, to be joyned to him. Or if we call it the converse of the Soul with God, (which are the words of *Gregory Nyssen*) or a holy conference and discourse with the Divine Majesty, (as it is termed by *S. Chrysostome*) it is manifest the love of God includes this in it: for it is the nature of this passion, to make us frequent the company of those whom we love. Their conversation is most welcome; their discourse delightful; we are exceedingly desirous to impart our mind to them; and especially to let them know how much we love them. For which purpose it needs not always the help of the Tongue, but can frame a Language of its own; and speak by the very countenance and the Eyes, and make use of silence in-

66 *Advice to a Friend.*

stead of words to declare its inclinations. According to the admirable expression of the Psalmist, who, setting forth the pious affections of the People to God their Deliverer, saith, *Praise is silent for thee, O God, in Sion* (so the Hebrew hath it, as your Margin tells you) *to Thee shall the vow be performed.* But let us take it simply for the desiring and requesting good things of God, and then we must needs acknowledge, that love being a passion full of desires, cannot but comprehend in it (as I said at first) the very Spirit of Prayer and Supplication. You know how much we long for that, to which we have given our hearts. And therefore if they be devoted in love to G O D, we cannot chuse but be ever breathing after more sensible apprehensions and tastes of him. So much as we love him, so much we shall thirst after a larger communication of his Divine Grace to us. It will make us sigh for more tokens of his favour; and wait for a greater power of his Holy Spirit; and vehemently long to be more transformed and changed into his Image. What was it but this, that made David say, Psal. 42. 1. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God?* The chased Deer in a great Forest, and in the midst of Summer

mer did not more long after the streams of Water, than this good Man (being it is likely in the Wilderness of *Judah*, and so denied the favour of going to the Tabernacle of God) did ardently desire the happiness which there he had sometime tasted in the Divine Presence. He opens his mouth, and pants after this with a thirst so vehement, that it makes him cry out in the following words, *O when shall I come and appear before God?* It is the heat of that Creature (to whose pantings *David* compares the longings of his Soul) which is the cause of its thirst; and that being a constant desire, which goes not off by continuance, as many inconveniences do, but rather more encreases, it bears the greater resemblance to this Divine passion of love; whose fervours and ardent longings are perpetual, and do not abate by length of time, but grow still greater and greater. There is nothing so likely as this, to enable us to fulfil that Exhortation of the Apostle, *Pray without ceasing*, and to make us importunate and unwearied in it; which are the two qualifications our Saviour requires in our devout addresses to God, *Luk. 18. 1.* Where you read a Parable of his to this end, that *Men ought always to pray, and not faint.* It marvellously disposes us also for

D 3

the

the Divine Favour, by moving us to quit all that is inconsistent with our desires, in hope of that which we pray God to bestow upon us. There was a Monarch, you have heard perhaps, who offered his Kingdom for a Cup of cold Water, in a time of extreme thirst. And therefore what is it which the heat of this heavenly affection will not make us resign to God and absolutely part withal, that it may obtain its Petitions, and have its desires satisfied? Besides, it hath one wonderful power in it (which nothing else can furnish us withal) to make our Prayers prevalent; and that is by fixing our thoughts, and fastning our minds to the business which we are about. For love, you know, doth not willingly stir from the Object to which it is devoted. It is this flame which keeps our heart close to the Holy Sacrifice, and will not easily suffer us to wander from the Gate of Heaven. It sets us in the presence of God; it keeps our eye upon him; it makes us converse attentively with him; and while the power of it lasts, our very hearts are tyed to him, and cannot go aside from him. But as soon as ever it begins to die or decay, then it is that the mind steals away, and gads about the World; till this flame revive again, and make us fly back to the Altar of God.

The

The best Soul that is, I confess, may feel some looseness and distraction of spirit; (especially at some untoward season) some Ashes may dim and dull the Fire: but yet this Love and ardent Desire will keep the greater part of our thoughts together, and knit our heart so to our Duty, that there shall be no long nor wide Breaches in it; but it shall still be strong, and fervent, and effectual with our Heavenly Father.

Thus you see how wisely these two are joyned together by St. *Jude*, v. 20. Who after he had exhorted the Faithful to *Pray in the Holy Ghost*, immediately bids them, *keep themselves in the love of God*. There is nothing comparable to this, to inspire us with devout and earnest desires. And it hath an equal force also to excite us to praise and acknowledge our great Benefactor, who gives us so many good things even before we desire them. Do you not see how Men delight to commend, extol and magnifie that they love? And how lavishly they are wont sometime to bestow those praises? There is not any thing in this World so excellent, but they will borrow a Metaphor from it, wherewith to adorn their beloved. They go to the precious stones; and to the Stars, nay to the Sun it self to fetch some lustre from them for

their expressions. And more than this, it's usual with love (as every one may observe) to go beyond the nature and value of things, and to make those hyperboles not uncomely, which in other cases are ridiculous. And as for gratitude, we are all sensible that nothing is so acknowledging as love: Every favour it esteems a Treasure; and studies all means to express its resentments. So that if it become a divine passion; you may learn from King *David*, how much it will dispose our hearts to admire and extol the perfections of God, and excite us to give him thanks, *because he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever.* Do but read the beginning of the 103. *Psal.*, and observe how he calls up all the faculties of his Soul to assist in this Holy Duty of praising and blessing the Name of God. And then being conscious to himself of his own disability to offer him the praises that are due unto his Great and Glorious Name, you may take notice how, in other places, he goes to all his Friends, and begs of them that they would joyn in consort with him, saying, *Psal.* 33. 23. *O love the Lord all ye his Saints*; and xxxiv. 3. *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together. Let Israel now say (Psal.* 118.) *that his Mercy endureth for ever. Let the House of*

of

of Aaron now say, that his Mercy endureth for ever. Let them now that fear the Lord, say, that his Mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his Mercy endureth for ever. And lest all these should not be able to make this joyful sound loud enough, he invites all strangers to come, and help them to the discharge of this debt, saying, *Psal. 100. and 117. O make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye Lands. Serve the Lord with gladness; and come before his Presence with singing. O praise the Lord all ye Nations: praise him all ye People. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise the Lord.* Yea, it is frequent with him to extend his entreaties to the Angels, that they would lend him their help to acquit himself, *103. 20. and he calls (Psal. 148.) upon all the lower Hosts of God, who are in the Heavens nearer us, and in the Earth also, that if they can do any thing, they would bear a part in his Song of Praise, which he composed in honour of him. And in the very conclusion of his Heavenly Book, that he might say all he could, he thus bespeaks the voice of all things, which either by Nature or Art are framed for delight and pleasure; Let every thing that hath breath,*
D S *praise.*

praise the Lord. All which Observations I thought good to annex to this Discourse of the Power of Love in Prayer, because, when we have said all we can, there is nothing so prevalent for a new favour, as praising God, and being heartily thankful for the benefits we have already received. To which the love of God disposing us so effectually, that it never thinks it can praise or acknowledge him enough, it must needs obtain much of the Divine Grace for us; and consequently secure our obedience to him, above all other things. Especially since,

3. *Love is ever Watchful:* Which is another means, to be joyned with Prayer, to keep us from entering into temptation. It always hath its light burning, and its loins girded. It is ready and forward to apprehend and imbrace any occasion of serving him, to whom it is engaged. It is jealous of every thing, which would rob it of that good, which it ardently desires. And therefore hath its eyes always open, and by reason of its heat will not easily fall asleep; nor suffer that dulness and weariness to infect it, wherewith others are usually surprized. I need not pursue this Argument any further, it being so apparent that fervent love and affection chases away all drowsiness of Spirit, and makes a Man slip no opportunity,

portunity, to do that which is pleasing in the eyes of God. And I am the more willing to quit it, because I have been so long in the former, and have two other Considerations still to add.

4. One of them is (which I shall but briefly touch) that it will breed in us a *pious confidence of the succours of God's holy Spirit*, in the power of which we shall be able to undertake any thing that he commands. It is impossible to have any heart to do well, if we have not this hope rooted in us; and it is as impossible to doubt of it, if we feel the love of God burning in our hearts. Which is both a testimony of his Divine Power already working in us, and an argument that he is as willing to do any thing further for us, as we find thereby that we are, to do any thing for him. It doth not only widen the heart to impart, but also to receive. And the very same motion which carries it out towards God, and towards others in sincere affection, brings home large assurances that he will abundantly communicate himself to it on all occasions; for the encouraging and assisting of its faithful endeavours, to do his will in every thing.

5. The other is this (which shall put an end to this part of my discourse) that is

hath

hath no less power to make us fully assured both of the blessed rewards, I spoke of, in the other World, and of the greatness of them; which are the strongest Motives to our obedience. There is nothing so sharpens the sight to discern, or enlarges the heart to conceive the things of God, as this doth. For God is love, as St. John tells us, and therefore he that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him. Among all the goods of this World, we find no where such repose and quiet, as in hearty love and true friendship. Nothing gives us such a taste of pleasure, and if the Object be worthy, such satisfaction. Of two it makes one, so that they communicate in each others happiness. And this satisfaction is wont to make them forget all other things, at that instant: For love is of such a nature, that it endeavours to take up all the room in the Heart, and would leave none for any thing else; that it may be intirely and wholly possessed of that which it loves. And therefore when it is turned towards God, and settles it self in him, it must needs give us a lively sense of future bliss, by uniting our hearts, and gathering up our minds (as I may speak) wholly unto it. It participates with that supreme good, to which it is united. It carries in it self a great

great deal of the Life of God ; it is a part of Heaven, and the business of the other World. But besides the solace which is inseparable from it, there is this remarkable property in the passion of Love ; that it strangely disposes us to believe all the kind expressions of our Friends, and makes us easily receive whatever they say, for certain truth. Upon which account the Love of God will incline us, above all other things to entertain every thing that he shall communicate of his mind unto us. And there is nothing so great, nothing so magnificent declared in the Gospel of his grace, but he that loves God will presently believe it, and lay it up in his Heart, as a singular expression of his divine Favour. For he feels by the power and force of this affection in his own heart, what God is inclined to do for those, whom he loves and takes delight in ; though it seem incredible to other Men. And therefore, as it doth not pose his belief who loves God, when he hears that the *Word was made Flesh* for the good of Men ; that *the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Jesus* ; that he died for Sinners, and laid down his life for the Redemption of Enemies : So the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead, his Ascension to Heaven, the Exaltation of our Nature,

in

in his Person, at God's right hand, the Glory and Majesty in which he is said to shine there, and in which we are told we shall at last appear together with him, are no Riddles nor incredible things to him. No; Love sees him there preparing a place for us, making all ready for the joyful Marriage to be celebrated in his glorious Kingdom, coming in the Clouds of Heaven to call us up thither, and to advance all his Subjects to reign, and so many Kings together with him. This makes a Man presently understand how God should design to reward our poor endeavours (those services to which we stand obliged, though but weakly performed) with an everlasting Inheritance. How he should compensate our present Sufferings, which are but for a moment and not worthy to be named, with a far more exceeding Eternal weight of Glory. Hyperbole's go down easily with this Man's Faith. He can believe beyond them all, and see what is far beyond, that far more exceeding Eternal weight of Glory, as the Apostles words import, 2 Cor. 4. 17. He is assured the love of Heaven will enkindle a new life in our dead ashes. He beholds it sublimating this earth, to an Heavenly state. And can well conceive this thick Clay shining as the Sun, and made like
to

to the glorious Body of Christ: This Soul also, as pure as the light, saluting its new born Body, and possessed with a mighty love, rejoicing for ever in God's bounteous kindness to it. All this it sees, nay feels; being already filled, as *St. Paul* speaks *with all the fulness of God*. For it feeling, *First*, what a vast difference there is between it self now, and what it was before, when it was pent up in scant and narrow affection to these petty goods here below, makes no doubt there may be as wide a difference between what it shall be hereafter, and what it is now. It presently concludes, that the same powerful goodness which roused up, and called forth its sleepy thoughts and drowsie desires towards its self, can still further awaken and raise all its faculties to a more quick and lively sense: or call forth some hidden power and vertue in the Soul, which hath as yet no more appeared, than those motions which now it feels did, before it was touched by his Almighty hand. And *Secondly*, finding its own nature by this touch of the Divine Love made so free and benign, so abundant and overflowing in kind affection to others, so open-hearted and gracious, it concludes that the Almighty goodness not only *can* but *will* do more for it; and confidently expects to be lifted

up

up to an higher state of blifs, proportionable to the superabundant kindness of that most excellent Nature, which hath produced already such good inclinations in it. It is impossible for a Man to be under the power of love, to feel the huge force of its flames, to perceive of what a spreading and communicative Nature it is; and not conceive very magnificently of the bounty of God, and have a faith in him as large and capacious as his love.

Love God therefore, *My Friend*, as much as ever you can; with the greatest passion and most ardent affection: and you shall find Heaven coming apace into you, and taste the good things of the promised World to come. You shall not only guess at your future state, and make conjectures about it: but in some measure know and feel the all-filling joy of our Lord, and possess that quiet, tranquillity and peace, which passeth all understanding. For this Divine love is the right sense whereby Heavenly things are apprehended. It is that which fits the mind rightly to understand, and the will firmly to believe those great and transcendent things, which the Scripture reports, as the portion of the Saints in light. It gives us a sight of things as much differing from all other, which we have meerly by dry reasoning, and which we spin
out

out by thoughtful Discourses, as the sight of a great beauty before our Eyes, differs from the description of it, which we read in a Book: or as the warmth of fire on the hearth, doth from that we see in a Picture: which cannot loosen and enliven our stark and benumbed Joynts. And if you would love God, I have told you the ready way to it; which is by preserving in your mind a constant and lively sense of his infinite love and good will already expressed to you: For this will naturally and easily produce a reciprocal love to him; and that will make you look for more of his mercy, even to Eternal Life. This you understand so well, that I shall not say a word to you more about it; but proceed to the next, when I have left a few words with you to say to God.

A PRAYER.

O God, how great is thy love! how excellent is thy loving kindness towards us thy unworthy Creatures! To whom thou takest such pleasure in communicating thy blessings, that thou dost not stay till we ask them of thee, but pourest them down plentifully before and beyond all our desires. O the inconceivable depth of that love, from whence
thy

thy Son Jesus was sent to dwell among us! who hath done so much for us, that he hath left us nothing to do, but to consider and lay to heart thy love, which hath so marvellously abounded toward us. For all things, I know, are easie and pleasant to those that love thee! Great Peace have they that love thy Law: and nothing shall offend them. O possess this heart, which opens it self to thy gracious influences, with such a mighty love to thee, as may set thee alway before me; and carry forth my Soul in ardent desires after thee; and fill me with an humble confidence in thee; and make me watchful, active and zealous in my duty; and never suffer me to distrust thy pity and indulgence when I unwillingly offend thee; and assure me of thy kind intentions in all the cross accidents of this life, which are most offensive to me.

I doubt not, O Lord, of a power from above continually to attend me, now that I feel thy love so strong and powerful in me. I believe thou wilt do more for me, both here and eternally, than heart can conceive. O how great things hast thou laid up for those that fear thee! O the height of that joy which thou hast set before us, to encourage us in our Christian Race! O the comfort of those gracious words, which promise us, after our short pains and trouble here, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! How pleasant
is

is it to wait for thy Son Jesus from Heaven to give a Crown of righteousness to me, and to all those that love his appearing! Preserve, I beseech thee, this holy love and faith most fresh and lively in my heart to my great increase in all the fruits of Righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus unto thy glory and praise. Maintain in me such chearful thoughts of thee, that Religion may be my delight, as much as it is my duty; and I may alway approach unto thee with a joyful heart, being glad to leave the company of all other things, to go to thee, my God, my exceeding joy. Reconcile me so perfectly to every other part of my Christian duty, that all the actions of an holy life may be but so many motions of hearty love to thee; and I may so feel the ease and satisfaction of all well doing, as to love and delight the more in thee, whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are Peace.

I am sensible of the uncertainty of all things else, but only of thy love, which will inspire me, I hope, to behave my self worthy of the greatness of it, in every state and condition of life. O that in prosperity I may think I have an opportunity to shew, how much I love thee above the World, by exercising humility, heavenly mindedness, charity, temperance and purity: and in adversity, how much I love thee
more

more than my self, by expressing all patience, meekness, forgiveness of others, chearful submission to thee and confidence in thee, with thankfulness for all thy past and remaining mercies. Be they always acknowledged, and never forgotten by me. For which end I again consecrate my Soul to be thy holy Temple, wherein may dwell continually pious and religious thoughts; devout Meditations of thee, and remembrance of thy loving kindness; intire love to thee, sending up perpetual Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving, together with the constant sacrifice of an humble and obedient heart. That so I may be filled with the comfort and joy of the Holy Ghost at present; and hereafter be admitted into the fellowship of Saints and Angels, with them to rejoice and praise thee, in fulness of love, World without end. Amen.

IV.

BUT as I would have you exceedingly in love with Religion, so I must advise you, not to charge your self with too many or too long Exercises of Devotion. For Honey it self will cloy us; and a perpetual scent of Roses may become offensive to us. Observe therefore what you can do with ease and a pleasantness of spirit: And when you find your self to be free and forward, then

then you may be the longer and more enlarged in your Devotions. But when you are very heavy and straitned, then it is not fit to tire your spirits and drag them along with you, whither they have no strength to accompany you, nor any disposition to comply with your desires. Our Body is such a Beast, and sometimes so dull and restive, that if we spur it on to a faster pace, it not only quite tires; but will have no list to travel any more. Whereas if we bait it a while, and suffer it to take some repast, and give it some rest; it will go along with us to the end of our Journey. When our spirits are dull already, we make them more dull by our restless importunity to do as we would have them. As a Child you may have observed, when he cannot think of his Lesson, the more his Teacher chides and calls upon him, the more blockishly he stands, and the further it is beat out of his Memory: so it is very frequently with the natural spirits of every one of us. They are so oppressed and stupid at certain seasons, that if we labour to set them in motion, it doth but dispose them the more to stand stock-still. But if we let them alone, and for that time leave them, they will be like the same child, who in a short time comes to himself, and is able
to

to say his Lesson perfectly. They will go whither we would have them, and perhaps run before us.

We must do then with our selves, as one that is weak, and going up an high and steep Hill. When he feels his Legs begin to fail him, and complain that they are weary, he rests a while and sits him down to recruit himself. And it will not be long before he hears his mind calling on him, to try if he hath not gathered some new strength, with which he marches a little further, according as it will carry him. And if he hath any Cordial Spirits in his pocket, a little taste of them may much revive him in this languishing Condition: Yea, the pleasant prospect of the Fields round about him, and the various Objects that gratefully entertain his eyes if he cast them on every side, will be a fit divertisement for his mind, to turn it from thinking of his weariness. Thus I say, *My Friend*, it is advisable for you to do; rest your self a while, and make a pause, when you perceive your spirits begin to flag. Break your Devotions into little parts, and take not the Journey you have set your self, all at once. When your mind tells you, that now you are better able, or prompts you to try your strength, then up again and go forward.

And

And between whiles, turn your mind aside to something or other, that is wont to please you much. Think of some good Friend, of the many fair accommodations that God hath afforded you, of the pleasant Meadows (as I may call them) and the still Waters by which he leads you; or betake your self to some Divine promise, and take a taste of the love of God contained therein, which is as a Cordial to cheer and refresh the Spirits; or run to the extract or quintessence that you have drawn (as I shall direct you anon) out of former Meditations; and some of these, it's possible, may make you quite forget that you were faint and weary.

And truly, for the most part, I think it is best, not to be over-long in your Devotions. I have heard of a very good Man, who was wont to pray to God, that he would forgive him his long Prayers. Which though they proceeded from an honest zeal, yet wanted their efficacy, by being indifferently tedious. For whilst Men study to stretch and wire-draw their Meditations to the utmost length, what they gain that way, they lose another; having the less of strength and solidity, the more they have of length. No Metal, you know, is more massy and ponderous than Gold;

yet

86 *Advice to a Friend.*

yet it may be beaten so thin, that it may be blown away with ones breath, or broken with the least touch of ones Finger. So, many times it is with our Devotions, which have some weight and force in them, if they be contracted and gathered into a little room: but while we spread them and beat them out to a tedious length, they become so thin and weak, that every Object which stirs, blows away our thought; and great breaches are made in them, by the least imagination that thrusts in it self upon them.

This is capable to be abused, I am well aware, by Souls that are not truly pious: but those that are, may as much abuse themselves, unless they understand and use it. Indeed when the Soul is very strong and full of heat, or when it is awakened by some remarkable stroke of Divine Providence, or when the mighty hand of the good Spirit of God is upon it, then it may, and will let it self run without any cautions or restraints: and we shall have nothing to do but to follow those thoughts willingly, which in another case we could not perswade to follow our wills. Our mind then will run (as it were) before us, our hearts will be pregnant and teeming with many good Meditations; which at another time we shall not be able to draw after

after us, nor make to conceive or bring forth one thought that pleases us. But now you must take great heed; lest at this or any other such happy time, you think to attain presently to the perfection you desire. Alas! *My Friend*, it is a great way thither: and it cannot be safe to make too much hast, though you find yourself never so willing and forward. For many there are who running full speed, have strain'd themselves, by fetching too great a leap, and disabled their Souls for some time after. And therefore run not your self out of breath, from an eager desire to be at the very end of your Race. Let *fair and softly* be your ordinary Rule: though sometimes in a very smooth Road, and when your Spirits are brisk, you may make as much speed as you can, for a little way. But we have seen several ride upon the Spur, especially in the Morning when they first set out, who have been left behind in the Afternoon, by those whom they seemed to have many Miles over-stripped. And therefore it is necessary counsel (to those chiefly who are beginners) to Travel so in the Christian Path, as we hope we may be able to hold out; and not to be so fiery at first, as to make us dread Zeal, when there may be good use of it.

There is another thing so nearly related

to this matter, that it would have challenged the next place in this Discourse, did your necessities require it. And that is to take heed you do not tire your self with any one thing, for that will make you indisposed to all the rest. This I take to be good advice to my self, who ought to be cautious, lest by over-much study I so dull and blunt my Spirits, that even Devotion it self become irksome to me. And I doubt there are too many of the Gentry and better rank, who so dispirit themselves by some of their recreations, that they are fit for nothing but to lye down and sleep. But to such as you, I need only say, that *you must not weary your self with any one pious Exercise.* For I can tell by my Employment, that if I keep one Author company so long, that I grow weary of him, I shall have no mind to return in haste to him; and all others will find me more morose and indisposed for Society with them.

Let me only add, that you will the better do this, if you *labour to understand the true reason why you do every thing, and mark the fittest occasions wherein it may be done.* The difference between the grounds (as we speak) or reasons of our motions, and the occasions of them, is this. The former perswade our will either to decline or to pursue something, that appears either good or evil; and therefore

therefore the stronger the Reasons and Motives are, the more shall we be induced either to avoid or embrace what is before us. The latter is only the opportunity or season, the advantage of time or place, which doth not so properly move us to do a thing, as to do it now. Time and Tide, we say, stays for no Man; and because the opportunity doth not always happen, therefore it stirs up our Soul (which is already engaged by some reason) to work more powerfully at this present, than otherwise it would have done. So that if you understand not only good *Reasons* for your Actions, but mind also the *Occasions*; you will be mightily inclined by the one always, and more mightily by the other at certain times.

To grow in knowledge and Wisdom is exceeding necessary, not only because it presents us with great variety of things to entertain our mind withal, and makes Religion more pleasant, and renders our Soul more firm and strong, more solid and compact; but likewise because while we search into the reason of our actions, we shall discern whether the thing be only lawful, or it be convenient also and prudent, and withal necessary to be done. And accordingly we shall know how to make a proportionable allowance of our time and strength, and earnest-

90 *Advice to a Friend.*

ness unto it. If the business be merely lawful, you will do it when you have nothing else to do. If it be necessary, you will give it a more certain and likewise a larger portion of your time and strength; and the very thought of its necessity, will enforce you to it. And if it be judged though not absolutely necessary, yet convenient, and more acceptable to God, if you perform it; then you will do it when you are best disposed, and in the fittest temper to do him that more pleasing service. And then, being possessed with an habitual love to God and to Religion, upon such satisfactory Reasons as you have propounded to your self, and well considered; the Observing of the *Occasions*, which either time, or place, or company, or such like circumstances present you, to express it, must needs be a mighty awakening to your Spirit, to bestir it self with all diligence, in the improvement of such an advantage. And these *occasions* are therefore, of such force to call up our endeavours, because we know, that as much may be done then, which cannot be performed at another time, so they will not wait upon us and stay our leisure; and that as they pass away, so we know not when they will come again. For *May* (as the Proverb is) *comes not every Month*: and a fit opportunity lies not, in every lock of Times head. And
if

if there should, yet it is bald behind ; and we cannot call back that which is gone, which may be better, than will be presented to us again. And if we find by experience, that these *occasions* do excite our Souls, then the observing and embracing them will be an excellent means to keep us from dullness ; because it is likely that God will favour us with more of them, when he sees that we use those well, which he hath given us already.

But yet you ought to be cautious that this do not prove matter of scruple and perplexity to you, if you neglect an *occasion*, when you are otherwise necessarily employed. For both prudence and the forwardness of our affections, and every thing else, must give way to a real necessity : and of two necessary things, that seems to be most necessary, in which we are already engaged. Make therefore a short Address to God, and both comfort and quicken your self, after this manner ; when you are dull and indisposed, or otherwise apt to be perplexed, upon such accounts as these.

A P R A Y E R.

O *My God ; whose Name is most excellent in all the Earth, and ought to be celebrated with the highest and continual Praises of Men*

and Angels. How happy are they whose minds are ever delighted in the thoughts of Thee; and whose hearts constantly burn with ardent affection and devotion to Thee! It is some satisfaction to think of that vehement love, wherewith the Holy Spirits above perpetually acknowledge thy bounty to them, to us, and to all thy Creatures: and to feel myself desirous, if it were possible, to accompany them at all times, with the like affections of a most cheerful and joyful heart, in that Heavenly employment. Accept, I most humbly beseech thy Divine Goodness, of these sincere desires that thou hast wrought in me. Graciously accept of these pantings of my Soul, after a freer and more delightful converse with thee. And pity the great weakness and dulness of my nature, which will not permit such ardours of love to continue always, as by thy grace I sometimes feel, in my heart towards thee. Pity, O pity, and take compassion upon me, when I am so heavy, as not to be able to lift up mine eyes towards Heaven; or when I move so slowly and faintly as if I had no list to serve thee, in the works of piety, righteousness and charity. O that I may feel my spirit stirred with a greater zeal, and carried with stronger desires, at all other times; when I am better disposed for thy service: that then I may run the ways of thy Commandments when thou hast enlarged my heart.

And endue me likewise with prudence, equal

qual to that uprightness and integrity of heart, which I hope I shall always carefully preserve. That I may neither neglect any occasion of exciting love, expressing a most fervent love to thee; nor dispirit my self by an indiscreet heat and forwardness to the performance of any part of my Christian duty. Dispose me but to be ever serious, be sedulous, self-assured and watchful, to be always well and innocently employed, and to be still going on with continued and constant motions, to perfect holiness in thy fear; and I shall hope, by thine infinite grace, to finish my course at last with joy, and to arrive at the happiness of that blessed company, who, as they do by their Commendments, harken to the voice of the Word, so they are do not any dishonour to the Word, but rather wish to be praised and thanksgiving given to thee, World without end. Amen.

Now such a friendship there is between the soul and the body, by reason of their nearness and between the upper and lower parts of the soul, that it is necessary it is, to well to understand our selves; and therefore, lest you should think the pleasures of Religion to be other than they are, it will concern you, My Friend, in the next place, to distinguish carefully between those consolations which are spiritual; and those that are sensible. For your receiving benefit, by this Rule, you must

must consider, that the spirit of Man being (as I said) joyned to a body, and made a member of this World, and yet belonging to another Country, hath several sorts of faculties (which we call its upper and lower powers) whereby it converses with both. With the former, which are the mind, understanding and will, it hath intercourse with God and Invisibile things, and is fitted to improve all lower objects to an heavenly end; with the other, which we call sense, imagination, and sensitive appetite, we can maintain acquaintance with nothing, but this outward World. Or rather this one Soul of Man is fitted with Capacities of such different kinds, that it can hold correspondence with God and the higher World, and likewise with the goods of the body, in this World which is sensible to us.

Now such a Friendship there is between the Soul and the Body, by reason of their nearness, and between the upper and lower faculties of the Soul (if you so conceive of it) by reason, as I may call it, of their oneness; that they do mutual good offices for each other, when they are able. And as the Soul lends such a great part of it self, to serve the Bodies necessities: so the Bodily Spirits likewise are ready to assist the Soul, in their better Moods, to a freer pursuit

suit of its own concerns, in its motion towards God and the things above. And more than this, the pleasures of the one redound to the other, what the Soul doth for the Body, returning upon the mind it self, and the bodily spirits likewise oft-times feeling the contentment, of which the mind tasteth. Hence it is that by discreet use of bodily enjoyments, and due attendance to the outward Mans moderate satisfaction, the spirits oft-times are made so mild and sweet, so chearful and compliant; that the Mind finds them more ready and forward to accompany it in the contemplation of Diviner objects; and it serves it self the more, by serving the Body for a while. And on the contrary part, when the mind converses with Heavenly things, they so powerfully touch it, at certain Seasons, that they make a motion there all over, even as far as the very Skirts of its Territories. The Heart is glad, the Spirits leap and dance for joy, and the very blood in our Veins runs the smoother for it.

Now while we have this sensible delectation in the borders of our Soul by the agitation of the Animal Spirits, to which the mind communicates its resentments; there is no part of us, but can be well content to accompany the mind in its devotions,

and they will not be inclined to withdraw their attendance from these delightful services. But on the other side, if the Mind (through incapacity, it is like, of the Body to receive them) cannot impress its perceptions upon the Spirits, nor make such a warmth and heat in them, that they are pleased, and move delightfully; though it really hath no less of God in it self, than it had before when they skipped for joy; yet now the Body becomes like a lump of Clay, and cannot endure to be drawn any longer to these Holy Duties. Yea, the Soul it self (unless it duly consider) will begin hereat to be greatly dejected; and to have little list to that, which gives so small contentment to it, as it is an Inhabitant in Flesh, and which makes its abode nothing pleasant and comfortable, for the present.

But, if in this state, the Mind recollect it self and consider, that, for its part, it doth what it did before (though it doth not feel it self and perceive its power in the same manner) and that it is not bound to produce these pleasurable motions in the lower man, and that they are more pleasing to us, than unto God; it might presently have rational satisfaction and tranquillity in its own breast (which is the best of all other joys) and be perswaded to
hold

hold on in its course, notwithstanding this seeming discouragement. And if the mind by these, or such like considerations, be induced to do as it was wont, then I cannot see but all its performances would be both more acceptable to God, and in the issue more delightful to it self, ~~and also livelier~~. For there is more strength of a Man's reason and will in them, now that he wants that pleasing assistance which the Body used to afford him in the doings of them. His love to God is the more fervent and unconquerable, in that it will not cease its motion towards him, though all things else fail it, but only the force of its own inclination. He is not, in true understanding more weak and feeble now, but a Person of greater might and courage than he was before. He breaks through all difficulties, and will not suffer himself to be over born by the great load, that lies upon his Spirits. I say just now that the lower man finding a delectation in God's service, might be well contented with it, if not desirous of those Holy Duties: and so the Soul in doing them, gave no great proof, at such a time, of the power and vigour of its own affections to them; because there was no impediment or reluctance, in the other party. But when there is nothing but a
sense

sense of its duty to invite it ; and all beside begin to withdraw their consent ; then it is, that it shews its resolution, and what it can do by it self. Then a Man demonstrates his heart to be so set towards God, and to be so much in love with him, that he will please him, though he cannot please half of himself in what he doth, in obedience to his commands.

And besides, by a right understanding of this that I have said, there may be some way perhaps found of recovering these sensible joys ; which are so grateful to us, that we never think we have enough of them. Either (1) by more perparing our Mind, and labouring to work in it a deeper apprehension of what we go about : And if the fault be there, this will cure it. Or (2) by gratifying our outward Man with some recreations and sensible goods, that it is in love withal ; whereby its spirits may be better cheared, than they can be, for the present, with Divine exercises. Seeing it cannot now have a good liking of that which the mind doth most desire, let the mind make no scruple to comply more freely with it, and entertain it with those innocent pleasures, which agree best with its inclinations. And if the fault lye there and arise from its lumpishness, this may be

a Re-

a Remedy for it. Or (3.) by using humiliations of the Body, by abstinence and fasting (if through too much fulness it be indisposed) or by smiting on our Breast, casting down our selves on our Face (if through too strong a taste of earthly joys it be grown untractable :) and if the fault be partly in the mind, and partly in the body, it may be in this manner removed. No body doubts, but discreet Fasting is very profitable in some cases ; and for the other, we find so many examples of them in the Holy Books, that we cannot think they are to be despised. Nay, it is likely that good Men found by an outwardly humbled body, that the mind was more affected, and apt to be humbled therewith.

But then remember that, it is far better when the Mind affects the Body, than when the Body affects the Mind ; and we should strive rather after that, though we should not reject the help of this. I will give you an instance, which shall at once, prove this ; and shew withal the influence the Body hath upon the Mind. Let a Man Pray or Preach in a melting tone, with much action of his hands, and with earnest looks and motions of his Head, and the affections of the People shall be exceedingly stirred : when as the very same matter and words delivered after another manner, shall not half so much work upon

upon them. Nay, if the Voice be but sweet, and the carriage graceful, though there be little action of the Body, and no Arts of Impression to conjure up the affections; yet the discourse which comes with these advantages, shall find more favour and better entertainment with the Hearers, than that which proceeds from an harsher mouth, and a less plausible behaviour, though otherwise it be of far greater weight and moment. And so we see many People choose to sit in the Minister's face, rather than behind a Pillar or the the Pulpit, because they say their minds are made more attentive, and their hearts more engaged thereby. From all which you are satisfied how much the Soul many times is beholden to the eyes, and ears, and those stirrings in the blood, which outward Objects create. But yet you know very well also, that one strong touch or stroke that the Mind gives it self by a piercing consideration, is of far greater force to breed even a sensible delectation, if the Body be disposed; than all the commotions and agitations in the Body are to beget a rational satisfaction and contentment of mind, though it be never so desirous of it. And the affections, you know likewise, that are raised by those outward means, are not half so much worth, as those which the mind it self excites, from the matter,

matter, and not the manner of what is delivered.

These sensible consolations then are not to be slighted, but it is far better to look after the other. And if when we desire them, it were as a step and help to the other, they were the more to be valued and endeavoured after. As the pleasant trembling and warbling (I may call it) of the Spirits doth much clarify them; (just as the Air is purified by being shaken) upon that account it is desirable, for the affording our mind a freer sight of its own objects. But if we love it only for the harmony and ravishing delight that is in it self; then it may prove dangerous, because it is apt to take the mind off from its own proper pleasures. It is to be acknowledged that when the Spirits are refined by gentle agitations, the Soul sits in the Body like to the Eye in a clear Sunshine day: But if at such a time it gaze meerly on this light, and do not make use of it to look upon other objects, it loses by its advantages; and for an eye full of light, lets go an heart full of joy and pure contentment. And besides this, it is to be considered that we may be easily cheated by these sensible delectations; and therefore they are not to be desired so much as the other, wherein there is not so much danger of being cozened. Many warm Souls think

think themselves very Religious, because they are moved at a Sermon, or can weep in their Prayers; whereas they remain as cold as a stone, and as dry as a rotten stick to all good works. They are covetous, peevish, proud and censorious: and yet these ill qualities do not trouble them, as long as they feel those pleasing motions, which tickle them into a belief that they are beloved of God, though they be no better. And on the other side, many good Souls imagine that they have more of God in them at such times, when they find such melting affections in their hearts, than they have at others, when they are without them; whereby they set a lighter esteem upon far greater testimonies of God's love (which then they need not want) such as Humility, Patience, Denial of our own wills, and resignation to his good will and pleasure.

Upon this account many Papists, that have left our communion, are wont wretchedly to deceive and abuse themselves: who profess that they find their hearts more stirred before a Crucifix, and the Image of the blessed Virgin, and with Prayers which they hear in an unknown Language, than they were while they attended on the Divine Service of our Church; where they knew, or might have known, as much of God, and our
 Lord

Lord Jesus Christ, and all spiritual things, as they can do now. Alas! they consider not how much the fancy is taken with Pictures and Bodily Gestures, and all things of Novelty; without any preceding consideration of the mind, or any consent of the will before demanded. These may be but natural motions (such as are common to us with brute Creatures) which are raised by outward objects, and not by our selves. And as a drop of sweet phlegm that trickles down upon a Man's Palate in a slumber, makes him think he swallows honey, or is gluttoned with sweetmeats: So many times do drowsy and inconsiderate Souls dream that they are full of the joys of God, and satiated with Divine Pleasures, when they are but mocked with those natural delights which agreeable Objects stroke them withal, while their fancies are awake, and their minds are asleep.

01 Let us attend therefore, *My Friend*, to the giving all satisfaction to our inward Man, and seriously comply with our noblest desires of pleasing God, by doing his will in every thing. And, if we can likewise give contentment thereby, to all about us; well and good: but if that be not possible, let us not think we are the worse because we cannot; since we are not the better, if we can. And seeing variety is so grateful to our weakness, you may try

Advice to a Friend. 405

ted in Heaven to give us hope of thy endless love,
in life immortal and glorious.

O how short is my understanding of all this!
O how weak are my thoughts, now that I re-
flect upon it! And my affections, alas! how short
do they fall of my thoughts, and how soon do they
vanish and expire! I can only cry out, What is
man that thou art so mindful of him? Lord, What
are all the Sons of men, that thou makest such ac-
count of them? And when I have said this, I
have said nothing, but that I know not what to
say, or what to think of thy love. But it is part
of the love, which I admire, that thou wilt ac-
cept of such as we have; of our little thoughts,
and feeble desires, and weak endeavours, when
they proceed from true love and sincere affection
to thy service. That, O Lord, I most heartily
profess. Truly, I am thy Servant; I am thy
Servant: and resolve for ever to continue in
faithful and absolute obedience to all thy holy and
good Commandments. I am willing to be, and
to do what thou pleasest. And I refuse nothing
(O that I knew how to attain to that happiness!)
which may make thy service always pleasing to
me. Support me howsoever, I most earnestly be-
seech thee, with thy Almighty Grace, that I may
not be disheartened in my Duty, by any dulness or
indisposition that seizes on me: but persevere in
well doing, with an humble trust and confidence,
that I shall never forsake thee, nor be forsaken of
thee.

106 Advice to a Friend.

thee. Preserve me from vain elation of mind, and false opinion of thy favour, when I feel my self transported with extraordinary delight in thy service; and from all dejection of spirit, and unjust suspicions of thy anger and displeasure, when I find less delight and complacency in the sincere and careful performance of all the duty which I owe thee. Fix me in such a steadfast and immoveable love to justice, mercy, soberness and godliness; that serving thee constantly in these with an equal and quiet mind, I may have an unshaken belief of thy immutable love to me, in all the alterations and changes which I feel in my self in this life; and an undoubted hope of a better condition in the life to come, through thy inconceivable mercies in Christ Jesus the righteous. Amen, Amen.

VI.

BUT that your mind may not grow quite dull, when your bodily spirits begin to sink, and to be flat and listless, Observe, My Friend, what it was that first began devotion and lively affections in you, towards God and Goodness: for that will be most effectual to continue them. It is an ordinary Maxim in Physick, that we are nourished out of the same things, of which we consist.

consist. Liquid things agree best with a Child, while its Flesh is soft, and but newly come from swimming in its Mothers Womb; every Lamb runs to the Ewe that yeau'd it, and lays hold of her Teats; which are near the place where it lately lay. And so may we hope to suck both most sweetness and most proper sustenance, from those truths which first affected our hearts, and wherein we have been wont to find the greatest relish. It is observable that Iron, which naturally moves towards the Load-stone, when it hath once saluted it, and hath been received into its embraces, is more possessed with a magnetick love, and grows more sensible of its attractions, and more desirous of an union with it, than it was before that touch, which made it feel how it could awaken and enliven it. Even just so it is with our hearts; which when they feel the kind influence and invigorating power of any thing upon them, are the more disposed to receive the touches and impressions of it again, and naturally open themselves, and wish for it with greater passion, than they did before they had that acquaintance with it.

If it was the loveliness and beauty then of the Divine Nature and Perfections, which first awakened your Heart, think of that, and turn your eyes towards it; for it is not
all

all withered or decayed. How doth a fair Image sometimes slip through a Man's eyes into his heart, and ingrave it self so deeply there, that it is past his power to rase it out? And will not a sense of God, and the light of his countenance, if it shine upon us, leave such a lasting remembrance of it in our Souls; that we shall like him, and love him longer than a Day? And if the first glance of him be so surprising, and make us, that we cannot easily forget how amiable he is; O how infinitely more affecting will a serious and constant contemplation of him prove? If a little ray from his face, that glided into our hearts, we know not how, was so striking and glorious; how shall we be enamoured, when we stedfastly, and on purpose fix our minds and affection on Him, desiring to be better acquainted with his Excellencies? It is impossible but you should find your heart more powerfully stirred toward Him? when you consider likewise, that you can never discover all of him, but new beauties will every Day present themselves, and shine upon you, while you feelingly converse with him. You will not endure your self, if you should love him the less, because he admits of your love, and every day appears more lovely and desirable.

But it was a sense of his love to you per-
haps

haps (which is far more common) that begat in you the affection of love to him. Then there cannot be a more delightful subject for your thoughts; nor can Religion commend it self by any thing more than this, that it is love, begot by love. And there is nothing surer than that you shall be constant and unwearied in your duty; if God's Mercies and Kindnesses can affect your heart; for they are constantly and unweariedly poured forth upon you. The new ones you enjoy daily are so many, that you may know by them, the old ones are innumerable. You can turn your eyes no way, but you see your self incircled with them, and hear something calling for your love. All his works declare, not only the excellence of his Nature, but his goodness likewise and bounty towards you. For every one of them doth you some office of love. They all wait upon you at the command of your Heavenly Father; and they would instantly deny their Service, did not he continue it by the Word of his Power. He must be blind and never saw the Sun, who sees not God and his goodness every where: What beauties doth not that great Luminary create? What fruits and flowers doth it not produce? What Liquors doth it not generate? How doth it cherish all Creatures? How doth it fill your Eyes and Ears, and all
your

your Senses with its Heavenly influences? And how many of those good things, which you behold by its light, hath God bestowed on you for your Portion? Rather than not love some higher Being, one would be tempted to fall down and worship this. The poor *Persians* of old, knowing nothing more glorious, had their hearts wounded with the Raies of the Sun, and the light and warmth of its beams seemed so admirable, that they adored and loved it as their God. Shall not we then love him most heartily, who made that, and all things else: who hath opened to us also another World (as I have told you) by our Lord Jesus, far more beautiful and glorious than this, to make us love him? You can never want matter to feed your thoughts, and to recreate your mind with delightful Meditations, and your heart with Heavenly affections; when his goodness is so largely diffused, beyond the bounds of all things visible. Or if, when you would meditate on his innumerable favours, you find that your thoughts stand still, and will not stir, or that they go backward and start aside to something else: Your heart will even then burst forth into admiration and great expressions of love, to think that his goodness should be so great to us, who can scarce thank him for it, or consider it.

But

Advice to a Friend. III

But suppose it was a sense of sin, and the evil of it, which most startled your mind, when you began to be Religious; then every thing you see, every thing you can think of, will help to aggravate it. And the more you heighten its malignity, and represent to your self its formidable nature; or reflect only on its baseness and disingenuity, together with its pride and arrogance; the more you will unavoidably be rouzed out of the sin of slumber and stupidity.

Or if it was the promise of Heaven, and the belief of immortal life (that I may name no more inducements) which first invited you to God; that is a thing so vast, that your desires and hopes of enjoying it, will not let you be weary of thinking of it. Immortal Life! What a good is that, will you say to your self? On what should I fix my eyes so much, and with so much pleasure, as on that blessedness? Who would lose his Portion in *Immortal Life*, for all the dying pleasures and possessions of this World, though he could be sure to enjoy them to the end of his days? *Immortal Life!* I am not yet awake sure; or else the very Name of it would make my Heart leap, and quicken this dull and sluggish Spirit, to the most earnest and chearful pursuit of it, in all the exercises of Christian

308887 F

stian godliness. What should make me move so heavily in the ways of God, unless it be, that I forget to look continually towards this *Immortal Life*? And what is that should make me forget it? How come I to lose that sense, and let go my hopes of *Immortal Life*? O wonderful Love! O patient Goodness! which still waits and attends upon me, to remind my Soul of its everlasting bliss. May I after so long a time of sleep, and such forgetfulness, be favoured with a sight of it? Will my love and free obedience be yet accepted? Awake, awake then all the hidden powers of my Soul; rise up and call him blessed. Who can with-hold his heart from devoting it self affectionately to him? With what pleasures can I entertain my self, comparable to those which grow out of the hope of *Immortal Life*? Or what service can be unpleasant, which is undertaken for so great an happiness? The thoughts of it make my Soul light and aërial, even under the burden of this Body. I feel it drawing me up above: from whence when I look down upon all the Men of this lower World, how do they appear, but as so many little Ants, busily creeping on a Mole-hill; while I sit upon the holy Hill of God? O that my mind could dwell there! Or, since I cannot

cannot reach so high a felicity, it may never descend from thence, but with a lively remembrance of the joys of that Celestial Hope, which may bear me up above all the petty temptations of this World ! For what is it that I labour and toil, with such restless thoughts and desires ? For what am I troubled and discontented ? Can any thing make him absolutely unhappy, who hopes to live for ever with God ? No ; I will rejoyce in my Lord always, again I say, I will rejoyce. I will bear at least, even all my dulness and listlessness to my duty, with a quiet and composed mind, in hope one day to be more full of life.

Here my Pen is very forward, and would be running on further than my design will allow. And therefore I must restrain it, and abbreviate also the remaining Counsels, having been so long in some of the foregoing : lest instead of a little Book to carry about with you and refresh you, I should send you a tedious Volume that will quite tire you. Let me only annex, before I leave this, a Prayer to GOD, which relates to what hath been now said, and with which you are not unacquainted.

A PRAYER.

O Most Holy, and blessed for evermore,
 Who art the most excellent Nature,
 the Perfection of beauty; happy in thy self
 alone, and needest not the Company of any
 of thy Creatures, to make thee happier than
 thou art. It is we poor beggarly things, that
 stand in need of thy continued grace and love;
 who art the Father of our spirits, the only
 hope and stay of our hearts, the joy and com-
 fort of our life, that filling and satisfying
 good, in whom alone our desires can meet, with
 perfect rest and repose. The most glorious of
 all the Heavenly Host can find no higher plea-
 sures than those of loving and praising, and
 obeying thee; whose Ministers they are and de-
 light to be, in executing the commands of thy
 holy will in every thing. For thy will is guided
 by the best and most excellent reason, and is
 so propense, we see, to goodness, benignity, and
 charity, that all its commands must needs be
 reasonable and good too, and intend the grea-
 test kindness to those that are obedient to them.
 Every Creature in Heaven and Earth, and
 under the Earth, and in the Sea, obeys thy
 Almighty Word; declaring thee to be as good as
 thou art great, and giving not only
 Rev. 5. 13. Glory and Power, but Blessing and
 Honour,

Advice to a Friend. 115

Honour, unto thy Divine Majesty, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Yea, that blessed Son of thy love, when he came into the World, freely chose to do thy will and not his own, saying, I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy Law is within my heart, Psal. XL. 7.

What is there then in Heaven or Earth, that I can wish, but to be united in hearty, devout and chearful affection, together with my dearest Saviour, and all the Saints and Heavenly Host, to that most holy will of thine, by a free and constant obedience to it? It is infinitely fit and desirable, I am sure, that we, above all the rest of thy Creatures, should take a perfect contentment and pleasure in serving thee, who hast not only gratified all our senses with great and delightful variety of good things in this World; but also sent thy Son from Heaven to entertain our Spirits, with joyful hopes, of having our weak and short obedience here, rewarded with great and endless pleasures at thy right hand, in the World to come.

Lord, what is man that thou shouldest have such a regard unto him? And what hearts have we, if after all thy grace we should delight in any thing more than thee; or be weary and faint in our minds, while we are doing thy blessed will? O how deeply should we have been indebted to thee, if thou hadst only admitted us to the happiness of knowing and loving

116 *Advice to a Friend.*

ving thee, and complying with thy good will, while we dwell in this body ! But that thou shouldest design, when we expire, to recompense the meer discharge of our duty here, with the continued happiness of being with thee, and enjoying thee for ever ; is an expression of thy bounty that exceeds all our wonder and admiration. If a full sense of this thy stupendous goodness, should now possess our spirits, they would grow, I believe, too big and large for our bodies ; and bursting forth in passionate love, would make their way into Eternity, which only is wide and long enough, to admire, and love and praise thee in.

But be pleased, O Lord of love, in thy infinite goodness, to give me at present such a true and lively feeling of it, as may make me think of nothing so much, or with so much delight and satisfaction of heart : and as may inflame me with such a fervent love unto thee, that it may melt and dissolve my will into thine, and consume all my corrupt desires, and abate, at least, the chilness and indifference of my spirit, and offer me up a whole burnt Sacrifice to thee, my God. And then stay, I most humbly beseech thee, for the fulness of my love, and praises, and joyful acknowledgments, till I come to that happy liberty, of having nothing else to do, but to love, and thank and magnifie thy Name for ever and ever.

Advice to a Friend. 117

It is my daily and repeated desire, according as our Lord hath taught us, that thy will may be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven; to which, both now and ever, I say most heartily, Amen. O purge and refine my nature to such a degree of virtue and goodness, that I may at least delight to do thy will, as those Heavenly Creatures do. O that those little, little acts of Piety and Charity, which I am able to exercise in this World, may never want this complacency in the performance of them; which is the only thing, that can give any value to them. It is a shame, that I should groan, or go heavily under the sweet, the easie and gentle Yoke, of my most loving Saviour; none of whose Commandments are grievous, but all his ways pleasantness; and his paths, peace. But there is nothing more frightful than to think, that I have at any time opposed his will, and thrown off the light burden of obedience, which he layeth on me. I adore thy pardoning mercy: and wait on thee likewise for power from above, to save me from reproaching his Religion, by so much as any unwillingness to obey him. I implore thy Divine Inspirations, to preserve in my heart that delightful sense of thee, which may render it no less my contentment than my duty, to follow Jesus, in his humility and condescension of spirit; in his meekness and patience; in his kindness and tenderness; in his ho-

118 *Advice to a Friend.*

liness and purity; in his love to thee and to all Mankind; in doing good, and suffering evil, in resolved denial of my own will, when contrary to thine; and in every thing giving thanks to thee, O Father of Mercies, which is thy will concerning us in Christ Jesus: To whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

VII.

AND having thus poured forth your Soul to God, you may feel your self sometimes so mightily moved; that your hearts run out, with much pleasure, in abundance of pious thoughts and holy affections, which you are not wont to find at other times. And then, *My Friend*, let me tell you, it would be of singular use, if you would set down those extraordinary thoughts and passionate effusions of your Soul, which you feel in your greater enlargements. These are as so many Records, which you have to shew of the Spirits prevalency and triumph over the dull flesh. They are the flights of your Soul, whereby you see to what it aspires; and how great and happy it may be, when God pleases. They are the tokens of God's love, whereby he would indear himself to your heart. And you may

may look upon them, as if they were Golden Chains let down from Heaven, to draw and attract you thither; and bind you fast, but willingly, to your duty. It is great pity to throw away such sweet flowers, after once smelling of them: to lay by such good thoughts, as we do a common Book after the first reading. I would wish you to find some safe repository for them, and to lay up carefully such expressions of your mind in Meditation or Prayer, as are most lively and affecting; and to fetch them out for your use, when any dulness or straitness shall oppress you.

As a good Student when he reads a Book, though he may let pass the most of it which he knew before, yet, remarks and preserves in his Notes the choicest parts, in which he finds great strength of reason, or sharpness of wit, or may be any ways useful to him in his design: so would I have you mark those passages in your converse with God and Divine things, which have in them some fulness of sense, some liveliness of conceit, some elevation of mind, and are so much beyond the ordinary strain of thinking; as if they were some beam of light darted from an higher hand, or the utmost endeavour of the Soul to be with God. When you find, I say, your concep-

F 3

tions

tions so fit and proper, that you seem to behold the bare face of truth, when something smites your heart with such a force of reason, that you are constrained to yield, or when such an holy breath comes into you, that your Soul swells and grows too big for your Body; let them be noted as carefully as the Month and the Day was, by your Parents, which brought you into the World; or as you remember the happy time, when God bestowed some singular blessing on you, which made this World a more comfortable place, than otherwise you should have found it.

Examples you know are wont to move us much; and therefore of what power may we suppose it to be, when we can propound our selves for an Example to us? This Copy, as I may call it, of our selves, besides that it will make us blush at another time, to see how unlike we are to our selves, will also excite us to recover the same countenance and aspect that once we had; and make some colour come into our Faces and warmth into our Spirits, when we are pale and cold in the service of God. It will remember us likewise of the pleasurable motions, that were then in our hearts; and remembrance is the way to call them back again. It will furnish us also with some mat-
ter

ter for our thoughts, when they are barren, and can bring forth nothing. For, though reading of some good Book, in this case, may be very advantageous to us, yet nothing can more assist us than a Book of our own making; the births, as I may term them, of our own mind: Both because they best suite with our notions, and can soon find the place where they lay before, and because they will remember us also of God's grace and goodness to us; so that either shame, or love, or hope, will make us strain to do the same again, or to excel our selves. When no thoughts will stir within, we must call for some helps without to move us; and what is there that will so easily enter, as that which was once within us before? Nothing sure can better fit us, than that which our own Souls have cut out and shaped for themselves.

As a Chymist therefore that is drawing out the more retired spirits of things if he grows faint in his work, takes a drop or two of his own Extracts, to bring his Soul back again: so should we do, when our liveliness begins to forsake us, and our Soul complains of its weak and fainting Fits. We must pour in some of those thoughts which we have formerly drawn out of our hearts; which are, as it were, the quintessence

sence of our Souls, and the very spirits of our Devotion, that they may recal the life that is flying away. And tell me, I beseech you, what a reviving it is, but to think that we once had such thoughts in our mind? What a Cordial is it, to the languishing Soul to feed, as I may say, upon its own Honey, and taste of its own sweetness? How greedily will it embrace, and how gladly will it smile upon the Children of its own Womb? How pleasant will it be but to hope, that it may become fruitful again, as well as it was before? to behold the Picture of what it may be, as well as of what it hath been in former times?

Save therefore some of these; and let them not all be spilt, as they distil from your Soul. Lay them up in store; considering the time may come when your Soul will be glad to have them restored to it, and will receive them as so many drops of Balm. Keep them by you, as you do some precious Liquor; which by long labour, and many Operations, you have fetcht out of a Number of excellent Herbs or Spices, or other rare Ingredients. For, though you must not have recourse to them every day, yet there may be a season, you see, when they will do you so high a pleasure, that you may owe your life or your chearfulness

ness to them. They may stand you at least, in so much stead, as to preserve you from utter distast of your self, and despair of God's favour; when you are apt to droop, nay sink under the weight of your Body, or any other load that lies very heavy upon you.

Chear up your Soul then with some of its own sublimer thoughts; and turning your self to the Father of Mercies, say;

A PRAYER.

O My God; What pledges of thy love are these which I have received already from thee! How precious are thy thoughts towards me! and how dear and precious have they been in mine eyes! O how great is the sum of them! I see, I see, how gracious thou art. I am not without many tokens of thy readiness to help me; and of thy kind intentions to promote me; by patient continuance in my duty to everlasting happiness. O how sweet is the remembrance of that time, when thou wast pleased to visit me, and inspire my heart with devout affections to thee? How joyful hast thou made me with the light of thy countenance, which is better than life it self!

Accept of such thanks, as I am now able to offer thee, for thy abundant goodness to me.

Blessed

Blessed be thy goodness, that I have not lived all my days, as a stranger unto thee! that my Soul hath not always grovelled on the earth, but been lifted up sometimes unto Heaven! Blessed be thy goodness, that it hath not lain continually as a barren Wilderness, but been fruitful in some good thoughts, and pious affections, and zealous resolutions, and worthy designs to do thee honour and service in the World. O that this remembrance of thy past loving kindness, and of the powerful operations of thy holy Spirit in my heart, may at this time mightily move and excite me to the like devout expressions of my love to thee. O that I may feel it renewing my strength; or reviving my Spirit, at least to a comfortable hope in thee, that thou wilt never utterly forsake me. There is all reason, I confess most thankfully, that I should confide in thee: and wait upon thee still, with a stedfast faith, for fresh influences from Heaven, to make me, howsoever, persevere with a constant mind, notwithstanding all the discouragements I conflict withal, in a careful and exact observance of all thy commands.

This I know is the best proof of my love to thee. And therefore help me, as to pray always, so to exercise my self in works of mercy, to do justly, to be clothed with humility, to preserve my body and soul in purity, and to discharge all the duties of my place
and

and relations with an upright heart and willing mind. And when thou graciously vouchsafest to enlarge my Spirit, in abundance of delightful thoughts of thee, and to raise me to the highest pitch of love to thee; O that it may not only please me, but make me better. Lift me up thereby above all the temptations of this World; and quicken me to be the more fruitful in all good works, and to excel in vertue: to increase especially and abound so much in love towards my Brethren, and towards all Men, that my heart may be established unblameable in Holiness, before Thee, my God and father at
1 Thes. 3. 12. the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his Saints. Amen.

VIII.

AND here I cannot but commend to you, frequent Meditation and serious consideration (which you might expect to have heard of before) as of singular use, for the continuance either of your diligence, or of those delectable affections in it. For the Soul is a thing so entire in it self, that if one part be strongly moved, the other will be so too: just as when the Nave of a wheel turns round, it makes the outer-

outermost circumference to circle about with it. Much is said by many on this subject; and therefore I shall only direct you how to meditate, when you are dull, and unfit, as you imagine, for any thoughts.

When we discourse (you know) with a Servant, and desire to affect him with what we say; if he be stupid and heavy, and seems not at all to be concerned in our words, then we are wont to make use of interrogations, beseechings, oburgations, exclamations, corrections of our selves, admirations, and such like ways, to rouse his apprehension. For we find that if an object touches any of our senses gently and softly, we mind it not while we are intent upon other matters; but if it strikes us with some smartness, and comes with a vehemency and importunity, it alarms the whole Soul, and makes it not only hear, but demand what's the matter. And thus it is in our discourses, if they barely present themselves before Mens Souls, that are otherwise engaged, they regard them not; unless by some such form of Speech, as I have mentioned, they put on some sharpness, and be armed with some Authority. If we speak, for example, to one that hath committed a fault, in such terms as these; indeed you are very much to blame; you ought

ought not to have done thus; it is contrary both to God, and to your self; the World will cry shame of you; no body will endure you, &c. He stands perhaps as if he were marble, and hath been composed of insensible materials. But if we say, What did you mean, when you did such or such an action? Whither were your wits and your conscience gone? Could you do thus, and not tremble at God's displeasure? Nay, answer me, Do you think that God is an Idol, who regards you not, and cannot strike? Oh, that any Man should be so sottish; that he should be such an ill Friend to himself! Ill Friend, did I say? Such a desperate Enemy, I meant, such a fury, such a Devil to his own Soul, &c. This kind of Language, it is likely, may make him seem a Man; one that is made of flesh, and not of stone.

In such like manner then may you learn to meditate alone; by discoursing with your own Soul after the way of expostulation, chiding, reprehension, and such like; wherein there is great variety; and therefore great easiness, and no less pleasure. It was a more awakening expression, for David to say, *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?* (XLII. *Psal.* 5.) than if he had only said, I do not do well to be dejected on this fashion;

fashion; it is to no purpose to afflict and trouble my self; far better and more seemly were it for me to rest contented. And the repetition of this again (*ver. 11. and XLIII. 5.*) gives it a greater force, and adds a sharper edge to it, than if it had been but a single question. And so likewise doth it more pierce a sinners heart to hear God say, as you read in the Prophets; *Why will you die? Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: Shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?* than barely to tell him, that there is no reason a Man should destroy himself; and that He is very desirous of his good; and that it is high time also a sinner should amend; and if he will not, that He cannot suffer it, but will certainly punish such continued contempt of his forbearance. And therefore you need not doubt but your Soul will sooner open to you, at such knocks as these, and more speedily bring forth its conceptions and passions by the Midwifry (as I may call it) of such like questions and arguings with your self; than by any other way whereby you endeavour to help its delivery.

Let me present you with an example of such a discourse, suitable to the drift and design of this Treatise. O my Soul (may you

you or I say) are we now to learn that there is a God? Dost thou know nothing but what thine Eyes see, and thy Hands feel, and thy Palate tasteth? Strange! that thou shouldst so forget to look into thy self! And must I be ever demonstrating to thee, that thou art not of this earth, but a parcel of another World? What? Dost thou not call God thy Father? Is it not him thou seekest? With him wouldst thou not live for ever? Say, wouldst thou not? Is not this thy earnest desire? Speak, and tell me if thou art not of this mind. Need I use so many words to extort from thee this confession? O how dull art thou, if thou dost not yet understand the difference between his favour, and all the Kingdoms of this Earth! And is it possible thy memory should be so perfidious, as to have no remaining sense of the incomparable happiness, thou hast sometime seen, he is preparing for thee? Where hast thou been? What hast thou been doing? What is become of all those holy thoughts, and of that blessed Hope of Immortal Life, which was so lately the joy of thy heart? Is that happiness grown less? or is it less certain than it was, that thou art grown so cold, so listless and indifferent? Let me hear thee speak what thou thinkest of it. Is it true, or is it not? Do we Dream, or
is

130 *Advice to a Friend.*

is it a certain Report which comes to our Ears, when Jesus tells us he will give Eternal Life to them that obey him? What answer dost thou return? Would a Man take all the World in exchange, for his Portion in such a bliss? Shall our present satisfaction here be dearer to us, than our future repose and fulness of joy in the presence of the Lord? What did I say? Satisfaction? Alas! how far are we all from that? *The eye is not satisfied with seeing; nor the Ear filled with hearing.* Who hath bewitched thee then, to think of seeking thy happiness here? Is there so much as room for thy choice, whom thou wilt love, and to whom thou wilt cleave, as thy chiefest good? Doth not necessity carry thee to God, and to the eternal World, if thou meanest to have satisfaction? O how glad am I to find that there is thy heart! What a pleasure is it to love thy God, and to hope thou art beloved of him? Dost thou not hold every thing for thy enemy, which would rob thee of such a Pleasure? —

But alas! how long shall I find thee full of these apprehensions? Canst thou assure me how many days this sense will abide with thee? O how suddenly may I feel thee altered, and become a senseless thing! How treacherous wast thou lately; how false to thy own resolutions? Would one
think

think thee a rational being, when thou so forgettest thy greatest interest? Was it thou who then didst govern me; or some brutish Soul that came for a time and officiated in thy stead? How often hast thou told me of a World of Enemies that watch for our ruine! and yet how negligent and supine art thou, as if we had none? Need I remember thee how long ago it is, since thou didst yield, and submit thy self to the weakest of them? Thou knowest very well, that on such a day thou wert very angry; but canst thou tell me for what? On another day (would I could say but one day) thou wast lazy; Were thine Enemies then all asleep? At another time a slight occasion made thee omit a good duty; O at what a small rate art thou willing to part with thy peace? Can one trust any more such a silly and fickle thing as thou art? Can one rely on any of thy promises? How wilt thou be able to hold out in such a long contest, as we are engaged to maintain? How wilt thou be patient to the end? Such a dull and lazy Soul as thou art, so timorous, so inconstant, so easily abused, so soon pusht down with every occurrence; what hopes can one have of it? —

By this vehement inveighing against your self, it is possible your Heart may
be

be much awakened, even in its most listless moods, to some generous resolution: and it may answer it self after this sort.

Sad things are here objected against me, or if that be too mild a word, why did not I say insufferable things? Much sloth, idleness, impatience (I wish thou couldst tell me all) I am accused of; and alas! my present dullness assures me it is too true. O that I could deny it, without any fear of a terrible rebuke! But must I therefore be so cast down, as to be discouraged? Can he that hath done ill, never be so happy as to be able to do well again? May I not hope so much, as that I may be chidden into better behaviour? Where is the doom passed that I shall never amend? Shew me that it is impossible, or else I will not despair of it. True it is I need a great deal of patience; but where should I begin to practise it, but upon my self? Is it not fit to attend and wait till I can grow better? Many enemies indeed I have; but shall I become an enemy to my self also? and shall I imagine, that I have no Friend? I have been inconstant, and peevish, and discontented, and a lover of the World, &c. But must I therefore be always so? No; Therefore I will not be so always. It is confessed, my indeavours have been careless and
lazy:

lazy : What should I do therefore, but be more vigilant and industrious? I have faln sometimes ; but is it wisdom therefore to lye still? Do you call this good reasoning? Is there any sense in such a conclusion? Rather I will take more heed to my self, and walk with greater care. What though I have given back in some assaults? May not a Man recover his courage, and behave himself more valiantly? O the folly of humane Nature ! that we should undo our selves at every turn ; first by doing amiss, and then by desparing to do otherwise ! Bless the Lord, O my Soul, that we are aware of this dangerous mistake. And let us not despond, though we have no reason to boast, and glory in our resolution.

Was not this the condition of other of the Saints, long before I was born? Am I the only example of an heavy and sluggish Soul? Must I be recorded the first in the Catalogue for inconstancy? What helps and assistances then had they, to restore themselves and to preserve them to the end, which are strangers to our ears? Must I dispatch a Message to some Foreign Country for their Recipe's, as we send for Drugs and Spices? Cannot we tell without the charge of going to *Hippo*, what *Holy Austin* strengthened himself withal? Must

134 *Advice to a Friend.*

Must we take a Pilgrimage to *Rome* to learn St. *Hierom's* Medicines? Sure, my Soul, thou hast the same gracious Saviour, the same compassionate High-Priest, the same cordial promises, the very same hope of the Gospel, which revived and supported their hearts; or if thou hast not, speak, that I may go and seek them. Look then on thy blessed Saviour, look on his holy Apostles, nay, look upon all those excellent Persons in the Church that have succeeded them; Shall we not follow such glorious Leaders? Are their Examples impossible to be imitated? If they be, they are not Examples. How can we be cold, when we think of the flames of their love? How can we be lazy and unwilling to do, when we see how forward, how vehemently desirous they were to suffer? What should hinder us from going on, when we have such a multitude of Triumphant Souls before our eyes, whom nothing could drive back? Shall pleasures, shall the incumbrance of business, shall Relations and Friends, yea, shall Dangers, shall Death? No; I am not enchanted, I am not affrighted with these words. Be gone you false and deceitful pleasures. How dare you perplex me, you impertinent employments? No more of your importunity, I charge you,

you, if you will be my Friends. Welcome contempt, welcome reproach, welcome poverty, or any other thing, which will certainly bring me nearer to my God.

But what is it that gives you this sudden confidence? How come you of a coward, to grow thus courageous? Of a Snail, who made you thus to mount up in your thoughts like an Eagle? Who will believe that thou wilt do such things? I will believe it (may you answer again to your self) whatsoever can be objected against it. Why are these called sudden thoughts, which are my most deliberate resolutions? *Through the Lord I shall do valiantly: He it is that shall tread down mine enemies under me —*

The like discourse you may have with your self about God, or any other subject. You may consider not only that he is gracious, and merciful, but cry out, O how great, how great is his goodness? Is there any thing thou canst name comparable to his loving kindness? What makes thee then so unwilling to go to him? What's the cause of such a diffidence and unbelief, as hath deadned and dis-spirited thine heart? Could I think that any thing would make thee fall into this stupidity? Didst thou not once look upon him as the first Beauty, as

G

the

136 *Advice to a Friend.*

the joy, the health and the life of our Souls? Who is it that is altered and hath suffered a change? He or thou? Is he not *the same to day, yesterday, and for ever?* Why shouldst not thou be the same too? Or, why shouldst thou not think that he will make thee the same again? How many times is it repeated in the Book of God, that *his mercy endureth for ever?* For whom was it but such trembling Souls as thou, that he proclaims himself so often, to be abundant in mercy, goodness and truth? But must we not then believe it? Is this the way to obtain his mercy by distrusting of him? What a preposterous course is this? How unseemly, nay, how unkind is it to question these gracious declarations of his Love? Let us be confidently perswaded he hath a greater desire than we, that we should be true and faithful to him. Let us rest our thoughts in this conclusion, that *neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Now when you find any benefit by such expostulations and reasonings with your self, and hope it would do you some good, if you should use the like in an humble address

dress to God; you may be furnished with several strains of devout Admiration, and pathetical Appeals to his all-seeing Majesty out of the Holy Scriptures. There are Examples also of the other; but expostulations with God are not to be imitated without much caution and holy fear, and ought not to be commonly used. It may be sufficient to conclude the foregoing Meditations, with some such form of words as this.

A P R A Y E R.

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the Earth? who hast set thy Glory above the Heavens. When I consider the Heavens, the work of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained; What is miserable man that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels, and hast crowned Him with Glory and Honour. Lord! what honour is that which thou hast conferred on him? in setting him now in the Person of Jesus, above the Angels themselves? For to which of the Angels didst thou say at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begot-

138 Advice to a Friend.

ren thee? And, again; Let all the Angels of God worship him? Who in the Heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? And therefore whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. O God, thou art my God early will I seek thee. My Soul thirsteth for thee and longeth after thee. O when wilt thou come unto me? There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. Shew me thy self, and it sufficeth. Lord, What wait I for? Truly my hope is in thee. My Soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him. By thee, O Lord, have I been holden up from the Womb; thou art he that took me out of my Mothers Bowels. My Praise shall be continually of thee.

But who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his Praise? Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful Works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the Sons of men?

Advice to a Friend. 139

men? What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will delight my self in thy Commandments which I have loved. My Hands will I also lift up to thy Commandments which I have loved: and I will meditate in thy Statutes.

O how I love thy Law! it shall be my Meditation every day. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than Honey to my mouth. Through thy Precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy Name. So will I praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorifie thy Name for evermore. Amen.

IX.

AN D that you may be the more humbly confident, both of God's continued goodness, and your own fidelity, and

the more fit likewise for pious Meditations; labour, I intreat you, as much as ever you can, to *maintain a constant chearfulness of spirit*, and lightfomeness of heart. Without this, it will be always night with you, or but a cold Winters day; and as you will have no list either for meditation, or any other employment, so you will be apt to live in perpetual suspicion of God, and of your Friends, and of your self.

Melancholy is a dull lumpish humour, which makes us of a frozen disposition, and a leaden temper. It inclines us not only to think worse of our selves than we are, but to do worse than otherwise we should. It represents those things as exceeding difficult, which may be done with ease; and those as impossible, which have in them any considerable difficulty. It benums and stupifies our Souls; and will let us feel nothing but it self. It quite dis-spirits us, and will not suffer us to do any thing, because it imagines we cannot stir. It shows us to our selves in an ugly Glass; and then no wonder we look amiss upon all things else. Some things it makes to appear bigger than they are; and then all the rest appear less. And having conceived them otherways than they are, it nourishes the conceit till we believe it real.

As under the weight of some sluggish matter in the blood, a Man sometimes fancies his Arms are as big as Posts, and then his Hands seem as heavy as a Pig of Lead, and he thinks he is unable to lift them up to his Head: so it is with our minds, when they are oppressed with the burden of a sad and melancholy humour. It makes all our duty seem very great, and our strength to be none at all. All impediments it renders as big as Mountains; but our selves not of force enough to remove a straw. It first binds up all the powers of the Soul, and then will not let them be unloosed. It makes us very fearful of that, which it persuades us we cannot avoid. And it afflicts us for that, which yet it makes us fancy we cannot do. In an heat it pushes us forward; but suddenly it cools, and says we cannot go. If it catch fire it makes us wild; and when it hath spent that flame, it leaves us sots and fools. It pricks us forward sometimes to an enterprize; but it self is the shackles and fetters that will not let us move.

This heaviness you must take heed of, and give no indulgence to it: For it is the *worm of the mind* (as one of the Ancients expresses it) which eateth up its Parent that brought it forth. Contrary to the nature

ture of other births, it pleases us much, when we bring it forth, but proves a miserable torment to us, as soon as it is born. Melancholy musings, I mean, are at first a very delightful entertainment to the mind ; but they grow in a little time to be a very troublesome brood. They are a dangerous maze, in which a Man may easily lose himself, and from whence he cannot, without much difficulty, get forth. Honey is not sweet to a feverish man ; nor are the sweetest truths acceptable to the sad. Clogs are not a greater impediment to the Feet, than this humour to the motions of the Soul. The eyes are not more darkened with some kind of fumes and vapours, than the understanding is with its black imaginations. The Air is not more Poysoned, when it is charged with a thick and stinking mist, than the mind is offensive to itself and others, when it is buried in its Clouds. And as the Sun, when it looks through a Fog, seems as if it were all bloody : So do the fairest objects, even God himself, appear in a dismal and horrid shape, when the fullen exhalations gather about us.

Labour then continually to disperse them, and blow them away by such means as you find, by experience, to be most available

vailable to that purpose. For chearfulness causes the Soul to breath in a pure Air; and to dwell in a wholesome and sweet inclosure. It makes our work seem easie, and difficulties seem little, and God seem good and so our strength seem great and irresistible. It enlightens the mind, it encourages the heart, it adds wings to the affections: and therefore he that forbids it to our Souls, keeps out the welcomest Guest, and the best Friend that Nature hath. It mis-beseems none but the wicked, in whom it is commonly a light mirth and a foolish jollity. As you see fine ornaments and curious dresses set off an handsome Face, though they render those who are ugly more ill-favoured: So doth chearfulness exceedingly become good Souls, though in bad Men it be most ridiculous.

For which cause, it is neither unmeet to use any helps that Nature affords us to acquire it; nor to call in the assistance of innocent arts and pretty inventions to invite it to keep us company. *Socrates* blushed not to be found at Boys-play with his Children. The wise and solemn *Cato* sometimes stooped to be a little frolick. The great *Scipio* thought it not unbecoming his triumphal body (as *Seneca* calls it) to use grave dances, and trip about a Room in

decent measures. Some devout Men indeed have pronounced of such like pass-times, as Physicians do of Mushromes, that the best ordered are worth nothing: but they did not mean sure to decry all those pleasures which of themselves are indifferent, and which the intencion alone can render good, as well as evil. You ought not to refuse any ingenious or harmless recreations, which you find will cherish or refresh your spirit; though by Souls of a dark complection they be deemed fooleries. It is too great a burden to impose on your self such restraints, as not to dare so much as laugh; for fear of giving occasion of suspicion to the weak, or of slander to the wicked. But since a spirit free and full of life is most useful, being indued with more strength and ability than any other, it ought to be preserved in its alacrity; and when it droops and languishes be excited to recover its chearfulness again.

I know you do not think it a crime to laugh; nor are you in love with a studied face. You are none of those who take innocence and severity to be such inseparable companions, that they can never be found asunder: nor that judge a free carriage to be a certain sign of an ill mind; and a merry humour to be a constant token of levity

levity of spirit, or want of judgment. But I desire that you would not only think it lawful, but necessary, to be pleasant; and that you would by no means suffer your self to become sad, under the notion of being serious. The Ancient Christians were so cautious in this Point, that we read in *Palladius* of an old Hermite, who, having five hundred Scholars, would never dismiss them without this Lesson, *My Friends be chearful*; do not forget, I beseech you, to be chearful. This was his constant lecture; which he repeated as often as St. *John* did those words (which he is reported always to have had in his mouth) *My little Children, love one another*. He took it, I suppose, out of St. *Paul*, who gives this admonition thrice to the *Philippians*, III. 1. IV. 4. *Rejoyce in the Lord. Rejoyce in the Lord always; and again I say rejoyce*. It is an unseemly thing for you to be sad and heavy, who serve so good a Master, from whom you shall receive the reward of an eternal Inheritance. If they that traffick in Earthly Goods rejoyce in an advantageous bargain; Why should not Religious People, whose Merchandise is Wisdom (a choicer thing than Silver or Gold) who have many Divine Blessings already in possession, and are in certain hope of more and greater; cherish

146 *Advice to a Friend.*

cherish a perpetual joy, and ever be of good comfort?

By which you may see, whence we are to derive our chearfulness, and to what we must be principally beholden for it. It springs out of an hearty and solid belief of the blessed Gospel, and out of a sincere obedience to it; and increases with our growth in spiritual knowledge and understanding, and in love to God, and all our Brethren. All which, it would be easie to shew you is comprehended in those words of the Apostle to the *Colossians*, II. 2, 3. where he expresses his earnest desire for them, and other Christian People, *that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.*

But when our natural spirits fail and sink within us, we must use natural remedies to recruit them and raise them up again. None are to be rejected which are not sinful; or will endanger to make us so. But those especially are to be chosen, which will chear the Body, and yet do no injury, but rather prove beneficial, to the Mind. Of which sort I shall recommend one to you,

you, when I have concluded this Advice, as I have done the rest, with a short Prayer to God.

A P R A Y E R.

O Father of Mercies, and God of all comfort : who hast given us everlasting consolation ; and good hope through thy grace in Christ Jesus. Blessed be thy abundant love, which hath exceeded towards us in him, beyond all our desires. O how excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, which hath so blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, that it is become our duty to rejoice in him alway, and to be exceeding glad, even in the midst of all the troubles of this life ! O that I could keep such a perpetual and fresh remembrance of his benefits in my mind, as may make me rejoice evermore ! That so I may recommend the Religion of our Lord Jesus to all others ; and testify to all the World, by my alacrity in doing and suffering his blessed will, that his Yoke is easie, and his burden is light.

Possess me with such right notions and apprehensions of thee, and bless me also with such integrity of heart ; that I may both have the peace of a good conscience, which is a continual feast, and be filled likewise with joy in the Holy Ghost,

148 *Advice to a Friend.*

Ghost, out of a sense of thy divine favour to me, which is better than life it self. Deliver me both from unprofitable sadness, and from vain mirth. Preserve me constantly in an equal tranquillity of mind, and a becoming chearfulness of spirit. Bear me up, I beseech thee, above all the afflictions which may befall me, by the joys of faith, and hope, and love. And when I shall need the relief of inferiour pleasures; O that they may never make me lose the taste of Heavenly delights; but rather dispose me by the refreshments of my body, to a more lively discharge of all my duty, and to a quicker sense of all divine enjoyments. And teach me to be so wise in the choice of my pleasures, that they may not leave me sad afterward: but I may remain innocent and unblameable before thee, and be better pleased also in the humble expectation of the times of refreshment, which shall come from the Presence of our Lord. Amen.

X.

THIS puts me in mind to speak a little of *Good Company*, as a singular means not only to chear and refresh your spirits; but to quicken and improve your mind also,

so, in wisdom, or vertue. *The joy of one Soul, is no joy* say the *Hebrews* in their common Proverb; which is muchwhat the same with that of the *Greeks*, *One man, is no man.* Good Company will help to divert our thoughts, and yet not let us spend our time unprofitably. It will make us chearful, and yet wise and serious: It will delight us, and do us no harm; but make us rather much better.

Some chearfulness, I confess, is supposed in a Man's Spirit, to make him good Company for his Neighbours; for it renders his conceits quick and pleasant, his words gracious and acceptable, and his very countenance smooth and obliging. But if some dulness at present make him not to be a good Companion for them, yet they may be the better company for him; and their chearfulness may serve to revive his spirits, and make him as brisk and well pleased as themselves. For it is not more natural to us to yawn, when others do; than to be uncloudy in our countenances, when the Faces of others shine.

We can scarce refrain from sighing, when we are entering upon a very long Journey, through ways in which there are many dangers, and which we have never gone before. But to perform it all alone
is

is so uncomfortable, that we are apt to grow weary as soon as we have begun it: and therefore are mightily inclined to seek for some Fellow-travellers, to make it seem less tedious. Our very Horses will go the better, when they travel together; And the Beast (as some Philosophers call our Body) which we carry along with us, will not be so soon tired, if we let it have some to follow, and bear it company. Whether it be that the forwardness of others spurs us up to mend our pace, or whether it be that love to them makes us like them, I know not; but so it is, that they who have the goodness of others to help and encourage them, are wont to find themselves better disposed, than otherwise they should have been, if they had lived alone.

It is Solomon's Observation, XIII. *Prov.* 20. that, *He who walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a Company of Fools shall be the worse for it.* We have an example of the former part of it (saith *R. Eliezer*) in *Lot*; who by the pious example of *Abraham* with whom he lived, became a good Man, imitating his works, and walking in his steps. For as *Abraham*, when he dwelt in *Charran*, was wont to exercise hospitality, and to receive Strangers: So did *Lot* when he dwelt in *Sodom*; whereby
he

he had the happiness to entertain Angels. As a Man (saith he) who goes into the Shop of one that sells Spices, though he cheapen and buy nothing, yet receives a grateful odor, and carries away a refreshment: So does he that converses with the just, partake of their good manners, and carries away a sweet remembrance of their works. Therefore, *either society, or death*, is a common Proverbial wish among the same *Hebrews*. One cannot tell which is the greater desert, as *Nausiclides* was wont to speak, (as *Athenaus* tells us) a place *where there is no spring, or where there are no good Neighbours*. He must be more than a Man, whose spirits do not fail him, if he want this refreshment. He will soon be gone to another World, if he have no society in this. It is a thing so necessary, that company not so good as we would wish, proves, now and then, better than none at all; if it be but to make us more contented when we are alone, and the more to prize our solitary opportunities.

And if we cannot have the society of many, yet we may find great use of one special Friend, if well chosen. Nay, it is the advice of the wise Son of *Syrach*, VI. *Eclus. 6. Be in peace with many: nevertheless have but one counsellour of a thousand.* O
how

how great a good is this, for a Man to meet with a well-prepared Heart ; wherein to lay up his secrets, more safe than a Jewel in his Cabinet? whose conscience and fidelity he shall stand in less fear of, than his own whose discourse shall lenifie his carefulness ; whose Opinion shall dispatch his Counsels ; whose chearfulness shall dissipate his sorrows ; and whose very aspect is delightful ! This is a Jewel worth ones seeking ; and he that hath him not, is but half a Man. *A man without a Friend is like the left hand without the right,* as one of the Jewish Doctors speaks. He is an imperfect creature ; and, according to this Man's Opinion, wants the better part of Himself. But howsoever we may take Solomon's word for it, that *two are better than one*. If we have the use of another Man's parts, time and labours ; it is as if we had two Souls, and as many Bodies ; and did see with four Eyes, and think with two understandings. He illustrates this in that place, IV. *Eccles.* 9, 10, &c. by putting three Cases, (which may be easily applied to our spiritual concernments) wherein the benefit of a vertuous friendship plainly appears. *First*, In the case of inward weakness, he saith, *if the one fall, the other will lift up his fellow*. When we
 slip,

Advice to a Friend. 153

slip, a good Friend will support us; or if we be down he will presently restore us to our selves again. *Secondly*, In case of dulness, *if the one be cold, the other may Communicate some heat to him*. If any Person think himself so strong, that he is not in danger to fall, yet the best grown Man may feel some chilness, and spiritual numbness creep upon his Soul: for, alas! we are at a great distance from the Sun, in compare with those who are above, and it is, as it were, a Winter with us, while we are here in this lower World. Now, *How can one, saith he, be warm alone?* But, *if two lie together, then they have heat*. As two Firesticks will singly cast no warmth, but let their Flame dye; whereas both together will make a good Fire in the Chimney: so will two Friends that lie close to each others hearts, keep themselves from that coldness, which separated would seise upon them both. And, *Thirdly*, In the case of worldly troubles and violent enemies that outwardly assault them, though they may prevail against one, yet *two*, he saith, *shall withstand them*. When we have a second, we may venture to go into the Field: and by a double strength we may take up the Bucklers, and hope to overcome, when we might justly doubt of our own single valour.

But

154 *Advice to a Friend.*

But I cannot better represent the truth of all this, than in the words of *Simplicius*, an excellent Philosopher; who hath briefly, but fully demonstrated the many happy advantages of pure and hearty Friendship, in a discourse to this effect.

*In Epist.
Cap. 37.*

“ There is a truth in what is commonly
 “ said, that when a Man hath got a Friend,
 “ he hath no longer one, but two Souls and
 “ Bodies. And then who can doubt, but
 “ that they who are possessed of each o-
 “ thers Persons, will have a communion in
 “ their external goods? But what is this, in
 “ comparision with that great light of truth,
 “ which shines in united Souls? and with
 “ that compleat vertue, which arising out
 “ of what excels in each, and being brought,
 “ as it were, into one common stock, is
 “ countenanced by the Heavenly Powers,
 “ who shine upon it, because of its perfe-
 “ ction? They are safer than other Men in
 “ their Counsels; they are less apt to trip
 “ in their actions; which are corroborated
 “ both by Prudence and by Power. Nay,
 “ suppose a Man’s occasion call him into a
 “ far Country; he is present by his faith-
 “ ful Friend, to all the relations he leaves
 “ behind him at home. Nay, not only while
 “ he lives, but when he is dead and depart-
 “ ed

“ ed to another World ; he is as secure of
“ their happiness, during the life of his
“ Friend, as if he still remained himself and
“ conversed among them. And what is
“ there more pleasant than the sight of a
“ Friend? What more grateful, than to
“ hear his voice, and to behold his worthy
“ actions? And as for trust and confidence,
“ neither Kindred, nor Alliance to great
“ Persons, nor Riches, nor any thing else
“ can so much assure it, as generous friend-
“ ship. And therefore *Alexander* was not
“ ill advised, who pointed to his Friends,
“ when some asked where was his Trea-
“ sures? There is no such Instructor and
“ Tutor, as a Friend. None can persuade
“ us with so much ease ; nor can any Man
“ reprove us with so little offence ; nor do
“ we fear to offend, and do amiss, upon the
“ account of any ones displeasure, so much
“ as his. When he is present, he improves
“ our pleasures, and augments our pro-
“ sperity : And as for our cares, he very
“ much lightens them, and eases us of their
“ burden. And what is there that can teach
“ us civility, and an obliging conversation,
“ so much as he ? Observe how willing, or
“ rather glad we are, to yield him the pre-
“ cedence in all things. We readily pass
“ by his faults, and overlook his errors.
“ We

156 *Advice to a Friend.*

“ We declare our mind to him simply,
 “ and without any disguise. We are stu-
 “ dious how to requite his favours ; and
 “ preserve, at least, a grateful remembrance
 “ of his good turns. And as for humani-
 “ ty, kindness, and good nature, there is
 “ none to whom we extend it with so much
 “ alacrity, as to a Friend. For whom we
 “ are not unwilling to expose our selves to
 “ any danger: insomuch, that if there
 “ were an Army of Friends listed, a few
 “ Persons would conquer great Multitudes.
 “ And therefore if a Man exercise himself
 “ in these things diligently, towards such a
 “ Person, and make them familiar and easie
 “ to him by means of this friendly sym-
 “ pathy ; without all doubt he will be dispo-
 “ sed, when occasion requires, to do the
 “ same proportionably, and as far as is
 “ meet, unto all other Men. Behold, the
 “ benefit of Friendship ; whose sweet in-
 “ fluences all the neighbourhood feels, and
 “ fares the better for it. For it is not un-
 “ worthy of remark, that it is Friendship
 “ which is the best bond, and ties us fastest
 “ to natural Relations. Nothing but this
 “ can link us to them with a strong affecti-
 “ on, and make us truly forward in their
 “ service. For whether they be Brethren
 “ and Sisters, or Parents and Children, or
 “ Husband

“ Husband and Wife, if they be not Friends
“ also, though they be obedient to good
“ Precepts, and perform the duties of their
“ natural Relations, they will not discharge
“ them with a chearful will, and with glad-
“ nefs of heart. They may be constrained
“ to serve each other, lest they should seem
“ to neglect their duty: but it is not near-
“ nefs of blood, nor any thing else, that will
“ make them freely apply themselves to it,
“ as a good that they love, and on which
“ they have set their delight. They must
“ be beholden for this, to friendly affection,
“ which alone can make these relations hap-
“ py. Whose power is therefore so pre-
“ dominant, because it is the daughter of
“ the will, the fruit of a voluntary choice.
“ This makes it excel all natural affections,
“ as much as the rational and voluntary o-
“ perations transcend all the other moti-
“ ons in humane Nature.

“ But what’s all this, though great and
“ wonderful, to that which may be still said
“ in its praise? We have spoken hitherto,
“ but of an humane good: That which is
“ the greatest of all, and the most Divine
“ thing in it, is not taken notice of; viz.
“ the approaches it makes to the other
“ World. For sincere friendship contract-
“ ing the Souls of two into one, is the most
“ excellent

158 *Advice to a Friend.*

“ excellent indeavour of humane nature ; af-
 “ ter union and conjunction with God. The
 “ union of Souls, who are near of kin here,
 “ is the preparation for the Heavenly uni-
 “ on : and it is impossible without this, to
 “ be a consort of the better Beings. The
 “ sense of which made the *Pythagoreans*
 “ prefer Friendship before all other good
 “ qualities, and to call it the bond and com-
 “ bination of all the virtues. For no Man
 “ that is unjust, or intemperate, or fearful,
 “ or ignorant and foolish can be capable of
 “ it. But he that would be a Friend, must
 “ purge himself from all the brutal affecti-
 “ ons of the Soul ; and then seek for his
 “ like. And when he hath found him, let
 “ him embrace that Person, as if he had
 “ met, according to the Fable of *Aristo-*
 “ *phanes*, with the other half of himself.

But the difficulty, you will say, is in find-
 ing him. True ; and it requires some judg-
 ment to make a right choice. We must de-
 liberate of all things with our Friend, but
 first of our Friend himself. And there-
 fore you must remember the advice of the
 Son of *Syrach*, VI. *Ecclus.* 7. *If you would-*
est get a Friend, prove him first ; and be not
hasty to credit him. For though Friendship
 begin in conversation, where Men soon find
 a mutual liking of each others Persons,

Words

Words and Actions; yet they cannot so soon discover that likeness of humour and disposition, and that sympathy in desires, which hath the greatest power to unite Souls. In so much that when by continuance of conversation and mutual liking and happy agreement in all things, they are made one; the state of things is so altered, that as at the first the Person was liked for what he said or did, now the speeches and actions shall be liked, because they are said and done by that Person.

But I shall scarce say any thing new in this Argument, (of which you know where to find a larger discourse) and therefore I shall only add this, which is sutable to the business in hand. When you want such an one, let him not be a Person that is sad and melancholy, or that loves always to be complaining; for, though he be never so honest and faithful, he will prove but an heavy Companion. And on the contrary, one that is too merry and jocund, will be no less disagreeing to a serious spirit; and be apt to offend more by his levity and imprudence, than he gives content by his liberty and mirth. The happy mixture of both these humours, which will serve for a remedy to each other, compounds that person, after whom we enquire. Just as

H

the

the *Romans* (it is observed by an ingenious Person) esteemed best those *Tribunes*, who testified most inclination to the Senate; and among the *Senators* thought those the best, who favoured most the *Peoples* side: So it seems that the best of the pleasant humours are those that come nearest to the melancholy; and the best of the melancholy, those that approach nearest to the pleasant. For where there is this temperature, the first sort will be more discreet and prudent; and the latter less austere and in-compliant. And if such a person have a quick sense of Divine matters; and be of a pitiful and sympathizing disposition, free from envy, patient of labours, and temperate in his pleasures; if he have done us good before he was asked, and when he hath done it, keeps it as a secret, and speaks not of it (which *Aristotle* observes, is a sign he doth it for our sake and for no other end) you may repose the greater confidence in him, as one that is both more able and more willing to do you service.

And therefore when you have found such an one, think you have found great riches though you should be never so poor. Great Riches, did I say? Rather the greatest Treasure in this World. For if a Man be more worth

worth than all the World, (as our Saviour supposes, IX. *Luke* 25.) then he is the most wealthy Person, who intirely possesses a worthy Man, that's like himself: And there is no way to acquire such a possession, but only this. For though a *Slave* or a *Servant* be ours, yet they are so but in part. The first gives us power over him out of fear, and the second, for reward: But it is a power over their Bodies only, and not over the Men. Because neither fear of punishment will tie up a Slave from rebellious thoughts; nor hope of reward oblige a Servant, to a chearful obedience in his will. He only hath intirely gain'd a Man, and so added to himself something better, than any possession in this World, who enjoys a *Friend*; and hath won an absolute power over the heart and affection of another Person. This is a rich Man indeed, especially when the Person he enjoys is one of real worth; having a mind stored with the Treasures of Divine Wisdom, and an heart full of the love of God. Otherways it must be confessed, a Man loses by this gain, and hath the less by this accession of seeming riches. It was an audacious fancy of *Boccacin's*, and an unjust estimate which he made, when (in his Balance wherein he weighs all the States of Christendom)

H 2

162 *Advice to a Friend.*

edom) he supposes *England*, which he throws into the Scales for a counterpois to *France*, to weigh the lighter upon the addition of *Scotland* to it. But if we conceive the like Balance for our purpose, we shall find it too true, that he who contracts a Friendship with a prating Companion, or a Person of no inward worth and value, will feel himself the poorer and the weaker (when he comes to weigh what he hath got) for his pretended increase; and the annexing of a Friend, will be an heaviness, and not a refreshment to his mind.

Who so feareth the Lord, therefore, shall direct his friendship aright: (as the Son of *Syrach* speaks, VI. *Ecclus.* 17.) for as he is, so shall his Neighbour (or Familiar) be also. God loves ever, as the ancient *Greek* saying was, to bring like to like. He will guide a good Man in his choice, and lead him by the hand to one that is good. In whom he will make account he hath found such a plentiful fortune, that he will not be content to forgo it, and take his portion in some other goods: For, you may trust the same wise Man, *Nothing doth countervail a faithful Friend, and his excellency is unvaluable*, v. 15. It is a great comfort to us, but to think that we have such a treasure: for we receive no small benefit by him,
even

Advice to a Friend. 163

even when he is only the companion of our thoughts, and is not otherwise present with us. And therefore, *change not a Friend for any good by no means: neither a faithful Brother for the Gold of Ophir*, VII. 18. Covet his company above all others; and do not think you can press too near him, or be too familiar with him. Love him exceedingly; and be not willing, on any occasion to be divided from him. There can be no danger you should clash, by being ever together: For as one of the *Hebrews* excellently expresses it, *A Needles eye is not too strait for two Friends; and all the World is not wide enough for two Enemies*. And if you must live at a distance from him; be not jealous of him, nor suspect his constancy. For solid love, whose root is virtue, can no more die, than virtue it self; as *Erasmus* excellently speaks, in a Letter of his to one of our Country-men. When covetousness, saith he, makes

Lib. 9.

Epist. 12.

Men Friends, their love and their gain must needs end together. And they whom pleasure allures to friendship, will make an end of loving, when they are satiated with it. And lastly, they who have a great kindness one for another out of a childish forwardness, or a juvenile heat, will forsake one

164 *Advice to a Friend.*

another with the same levity, that they embraced. Our kindness relies on stronger Pillars; for it was neither hope of gain, nor pleasure, nor youthful affection, but an honest love of wisdom and our common studies which joined us together. For good Men are linkt and chain'd to each other, by their admiration and esteem of the same things. And since the study of vertue is not subject to those alterations and changes of fortune that other things undergo: the benevolence of good Men must needs be perpetual, and is not in danger to suffer that decay, which is wont to be the fate of vulgar friendship. But that it may be the better preserved and maintained, it is necessary that Friends frequent the company and conversation of each other, as much as they can. For, as *Themistius* well notes, *Exercise is all in all things: and mutual conversation, or correspondence is the exercise of friendship.*

Orat. 3. But it is time to make an end of this, which I have the longer continued for the reason now named; because the writing of all this is a good exercise of my Friendship to you. Let me only cast in this one Rule, at the bottom of it. It is good to observe when any chillness and heaviness creeps upon you, from what quarter it comes. I mean,

mean, you must follow the stream backward to the Fountain, and inform your self of the cause of the alteration. If it be too much company; then, as soon as you can, seek retirement, and betake your self to private Meditation. If too much solitariness; then find out some agreeable company, or run to your Friend. If the change of weather, then wait, if there be no other relief, till it change again. If you know not what, then believe you shall find a remedy in God's goodness, you know not how. And it may give you some pleasure perhaps, when you are most indisposed, as to think of your Friend, so to send up this short Prayer to Heaven for him, and for all those that heartily love you, and to hope that they also are making the same address upon your account, I put them all together indistinctly; it is in your power, at any time, to make it as particular as you please.

A PRAYER.

Thou art love, O God: and art to be infinitely loved above all things. Blessed be thy goodness, who wouldst have us dwell in love; that we may dwell in Thee.

166 Advice to a Friend.

and Thou in us. Blessed by thy goodness, that I am capable of such happiness; especially of loving so great a good as thy self, who art the fountain of all other good, from whom comes every good and perfect gift. To thee I owe my Health, my Peace, my Plenty, my Wit, and all other Indowments, either of my body or of my mind. I am exceedingly indebted to Thee, for the inconceivable felicity which thou hast put me in hope of in the other World; and that thou art pleased to let me begin it here, in the company of good men, especially in the love of kind and faithful Friends.

What am I, O God, that thou shouldst make me so happy, as to lodge me in the dearest affection of any pious breast! What am I that thou shouldst refresh my wearisome pilgrimage with such delightful society; and shouldst tie any heart so fast to mine, that I should have the benefit of another Soul besides mine own! to counsel, assist and comfort me; to take an equal share with me in all the good and evil things of this life.

I thank thee again, O my God, and can never thank thee enough, for this and all other thy gifts wherewith thou hast enriched me: beseeching thee that I may have the grace, to improve and make the best use of this blessing to my further increase in Wisdom and Goodness, which are the greatest treasures.

treasures of all. Fill my mind with the noblest thoughts, that I may have something worthy to communicate and impart to that Soul, which inlightens mine. Inspire my heart with the devoutest affections, that I may redouble the warmth I receive from thence; and inflame it with a greater zeal to all good works. O that I may feel my self disposed and inclined by a particular love to some, to be kind and loving to all other men: and especially to love thee and our blessed Lord the more, my best and my eternal Friend. Raise me, I beseech thee, hereby to the highest pitch of heavenly love; that I may imitate the blessed beings above, and begin the happiness wherein they live. May the strength of my affection to those who are dear to me, and my delight to serve them, and my easiness to comply with them; make me of one mind and spirit and will with thee my most gracious God: so that my love to thee may grow more powerful and fervent, and my obedience become more free and chearful, more ready and forward, more faithful and constant, fuller of complacence and intire pleasure and joy in thy service. May the benefit of that sweet company I have along with me, make me tread the more evenly, and be the more unwearied, and travel the faster and more willingly, during my whole journey through this World.

168 Advice to a Friend.

And may our hearts be so inseparably knit in the purest love and kindness, that no accidents, no jealousies may disturb and discompose our friendship: but every thing more confirm and strengthen it, by making us feel the need and comfort of it.

And let me beseech thee to bestow upon those to whom I am united in friendly affection, all that I can desire for my self: A healthful body, a long life, a clear understanding, a ready apprehension, and exact prudence, a virtuous will, an unwearied diligence, a constant cheerfulness, a sweet and obliging behaviour, an useful conversation, and good success in all their undertakings. Requite all their kindneses to me, in multitude of blessings; and above all with a sense of thy Divine favour, with abilities to do much good, and with the perpetual joy and comfort of the Holy Ghost.

O blessed Lord, hear all their own Prayers. Hear them for themselves, and for me also. And stir in up all, to pray with greater ardency; with a more zealous affection to thy Honour, and each others good; and with a most inflamed desire to be as like thee, as possibly we can. That after a constant and hearty friendship here in this World, we may have a comfortable departure out of it; and rest in a joyful hope to meet together in the o-
ther

ther life, and embrace in the bosom of our blessed Lord, Christ Jesus. Amen, Amen.

XI.

IN the next place I must exhort you to exercise a great faith in God's good Providence, which rules in all affairs. This is of great force to banish all perplexing thoughts; and consequently to make you of a chearful spirit, and to be good company for your self when you are alone, or about your necessary employments. And it hath not only this oblique aspect upon our Souls, to defend them from that heaviness and sadness which is too apt to oppress them; but is of a more direct and manifest influence to comfort and enliven them, on all occasions. By removing, that is, those impediments out of the way, which are a clog and a burden to our spirits, and by begetting likewise an higher faith in God's goodness to our better part, which takes such care of our lower concernments. For what is it that makes our heart unwilling to go to God, and to wait upon him, as *Mary* sat at our Saviour's Feet; but the multitude of businesses wherewith, like *Martha*, we incumber and trouble our selves? We
 imagine

imagine we can never take care enough about those things; and when we have done our best, still we remain solicitous about the success. And so our Souls being already filled and crowded with these thoughts; there is no room left to admit of any other, till they be thrust out.

And suppose now our own Conscience begin in this case to reprove us, and bid us go to our God; yet if it be that only which urges us, and not a quiet faith in his good providence, how do we hear those things calling us off again, and inviting, nay drawing our hearts to them; as being indeed their own? It is nothing else that distracts us but these cares; which are not ejected by faith, but only silenced and stilled a little by natural conscience, which tells us we do amiss. Or if they have lain quiet a while, and given us leave to pray to God, and think of better things; how easily do they thrust out all our good Meditations and pious affections, when they return again? Nay, how do they eat up and prey on the very Soul it self, as well as on all the good notions which are within it?

If we be necessarily engaged then in more affairs, than willingly we would; it is as necessary we should be strongly perswaded of the Care which God takes
of

of all things, that they shall go well with those who trust in him. That so we may use but a moderate diligence, and not troubles our selves about issues and events: and that we may save abundance of time for better thoughts; and that these affairs may not take up our hearts, both while we are in them, and when we are out of them too. That's too much familiarity with them, when they will never let us alone. And we ought to endeavour that, though they employ our minds for many Hours; yet, when we have done our work, they may not then ingross our time also.

The care of Religion is great enough; we need not take upon us the care of the World too. With what reason do we complain, that we find it difficult to govern our selves, when it seems, we think our selves meet to govern this World and all? No wonder that we are weary of our work, when we have not only our own to do, but will needs undertake God's work likewise. We may well sigh and be discouraged, when we carry such a vast burden upon our Shoulders. There is no end of these Cares; which intermix themselves not only with our particular businesses, but trouble us continually with sad and fearful thoughts about the affairs of Nations, and the

the state of the publick, wherein our private wealth is imbarqued. And this is the mischief of it, that when we are discouraged by this means, it is a sin, and not merely our misery : because we will meddle with more than belongs unto us. We put our selves to an unnecessary pain, to put our selves out of the favour and care of him ; who would ease us of this burden, by casting it upon his merciful providence. It is an uncomfortable and a sinful condition ; which is aggravated by this, that it is a needless and a bold intrusion into his business who governs the World. It is as if I should be very solicitous, whether the Sun will shine to morrow or not ; when I have occasion to stay all Day about my affairs at home.

Let us do what concerns us ; and leave God to dispose of all the rest. And let us believe that he will assist us in our dispatches ; and a great deal the more if we will not stretch our selves to meddle beyond our line. He will help us to do what we ought, when we do no more than we should. When we are not oppressed, I mean, with fear that we shall not be able to go thorough our employments ; and when we are not too careful what will become of them, after we have finished our work. God will take

take care that we shall do them, and that they shall have the best success, when they are done. Look upon your self as a part of the World, and upon God as the Governour of the whole. And then by faith in him, make your self (as it were) a part of himself; that so he may have a particular concernment in your affairs. Look upon your self not only as one of his Family, and therefore under his General Providence: but also as one of his Children, for whose good he will more than ordinarily provide. And be always confident he will provide the better for you; because you trust him, and leave your self wholly to his Wisdom and Kindness.

I could entertain you here with a delightful Discourse on this Argument; were it not that I would not burden you, as I said before, with too great a Book. Let me only advise you of this, which shall excuse me from adding a *Prayer* at the end of this Discourse; especially since you know where to find one in another place: That, as it is most for our ease to recommend all we have and do to God's good providence, and resolutely to rest satisfied in what he determines: so the most effectual course to obtain this resignation to him and confidence in him, is rather to exercise it in our Devotions

174 *Advice to a Friend.*

Devotions by acts of resignation and expressions of our trust in his great goodness, than to be petitioning him continually to bestow upon us this grace. Say therefore, with the heartiest affection, upon all occasions, in the words of David,

Thou art my hope, O Lord, thou art my trust from my Youth. I trust in the Mercy of God for ever and ever. Mine

eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: I will hope continually, and will yet praise Thee more and more. What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge, and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in Man. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in Princes. I will therefore trust in the Lord, and do good: I will commit my way unto him, that he may bring it to pass.

Behold, O Father of Mercies, how intirely I confide in thee. I absolutely resign my self and all I have unto thee. I rely upon thy bounty, for what thou judgest fit and needful for me. Thy Goodness is the greatest treasure; thy Truth and Faithfulness is my best security; thy gracious Promises and careful Providence is my comfort; thy

thy Wisdom is my satisfaction in all events and accidents; thy Power is my support, protection, and safeguard. Lead me whither thou plearest; and I will follow thee with a chearful heart. I refuse nothing which comes from thy hands, O most loving Father. I submit to thy orders; and hope that all things shall work together for my good. And I trust in thy grace, that I shall always do as I do now: steadfastly adhering thus unto thee, and never suffering any thing that befalls me, to pull me away from this humble faith in thy wise and almighty Goodness; to which I refer my self, now and ever.

And the more to awaken you to this; let me tell you, *My Friend*, that we find examples of it, even in the Heathens themselves, who, in a strange fit of devotion, have sometime cried out on this fashion.

“O Man, what dost thou? Why dost
 “thou not free thy self from
 “all this trouble? Adventure *Arrian. Epist.*
 “at last, with eyes lifted up *L. 2. Cap. 16.*
 “to God, to say unto him, Use me at thy
 “pleasure O God, for the time to come.
 “Thou hast my perfect consent. I am of
 “the same mind, that thou art. I have a
 “mind to nothing, but what thou thinkest
 “good. Wilt thou have me bear an Of-
 “fice; or shall I lead a private life? Must

“I

176 *Advice to a Friend.*

" I stay, or must I fly? Shall I be poor, or
 " shall I be rich? I am ready to obey. I
 " will defend thee, against all the World.
 " I will apologize for thy providence a-
 " bout these things, to every body. I say
 " that all is good, because thou art so.

Thus they exhorted Men to follow God
 chearfully, in a belief that he is Wise and
 Good: for we can never be happy, said
 they, if we follow him sighing and groan-
 ing; as a Man doth one that is stronger
 than he, who pulls him after him, when he
 hath no mind to go. " Let us begin every
 " thing (saith the same Philosopher in ano-
 " ther place) without too much desire or
 " averſation. Let us not encline to this, or
 " to the other way. But behave our selves
 " like a Traveller, who when he comes to
 " two ways, asks him whom he meets next,
 " which of those he shall take to such a
 " place: having no inclination to the right
 " hand, rather than to the left; but desi-
 " ring only to know the true and direct
 " way that will carry him to his Journeys
 " end. Just so must we come to God, as to
 " a Guide; as to one who shall dispose of
 " our motions as he pleases. We must not
 " look about us, and desire of him this or
 " the other thing which we fancy. We must
 " not direct Him what course he should
 " take

“ take with us; nor desire him to show us
“ this rather than that: but embrace that
“ which he proposes; and desire only he
“ will conduct us in the right way to hap-
“ piness. This is our duty and our safety.
“ Whereas now you shall see Men run to
“ him, and say, *Lord have mercy upon me;*
“ deliver me from such and such a thing.
“ Wretch that thou art! Wouldst thou
“ have any thing but what is best? And
“ who can tell what that is? Is there any
“ thing best, but that which seems so to
“ God? Why then dost thou endeavour, as
“ much as in thee lies, to corrupt him who
“ is to judge; and to seduce Him who is
“ thy Counsellour; and to move him, by
“ thy cries, to do other ways than he thinks
“ good? Cease these clamours, and do not
urge him to incline to thy desires; but
suffer him to follow his own Wisdom. It
cannot be any delight to him to cross and
vex us. If what we are inclined to desire
be conformable to his judgment; he will
not deny it us, meerly because we are in-
clined to desire it. But he will give us
that which is good in his eyes, as the holy
Scripture speaks; And what would we
have more? Will it not suffice us to have
our own hearts desire? And what should
that be, if we are well advis'd, but this;
that

that we may have what unsearchable Wisdom, united with Infinite Power and Goodness, shall think to be fittest for us, and most convenient? Of this we need not doubt: And this is sufficient for any Man's satisfaction.

XII.

AND, as a means to all this which hath been said in the foregoing Advices, I cannot but desire you, in the next place, to *Receive as often as you can the Holy Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.* For there you have an ample testimony of God's tender love to you and care over you. There a number of Christian Brethren and good Friends meet, to rejoice together. There your Soul is excited to the noblest thoughts and sublimest Meditations of your Saviour's love, and of the purchase he hath made for you: The sight of which will not let you stand in need of being chidden, by your self, into the devoutest affections, and the most chearful resignation to him; who having given so great a gift as his Son to you, will not deny, you may be confident, to bestow lesser benefit, when he sees them expedient for you.

you. In brief; This is an holy Feast, where our Lord not only makes you good cheer for the present; but renews your decayed strength, and begets in you a greater liveliness for the future.

One great end of the institution of publick Feasts, amongst all Nations in the World, was for the maintaining of unity, love and friendship among the People that lived under the same Laws; and for the recreating of those who were tired with their constant labours. And it is the design, we likewise see, of our private Feasts; which are times of ease and refreshment for our neighbours, and preserve also good will among them: according to that of *Ben Syra*, a famous Person among the Jews, *Spread the Table and contention ceases.* We are all good Friends at a Feast; Upon which account *Plato* was of Opinion that their Gods themselves, in much pity to Mankind, whose life is full of labour, did appoint those Festival times for them, that they might have a little relaxation, and be encouraged by those publick joys, to proceed without any murmuring, in their several employments.

Θεοὶ δὲ κατεῖχον
τὰς τὰς ἀνθρώπων, &c. Lib. 2.
de Leg.

We are very sure that God hath instituted,

ted, by his particular command, this Holy Feast (like to which none ever was, and which we may celebrate as oft as we please) upon the Body and Bloud of his dear Son. Whereby a great love, sure, will be begot in our hearts to him and his service, whose guests we are; and at whose cost the entertainment is made, meerly out of his extraordinary grace and royal favour towards us. This sure will be a singular refreshment and restorative to our spirits; when we grow weary, and are almost spent in the work of our Lord. The sweetness of this will be like Wine to the Heart, or like Marrow and Fatness to the Bones. It will stir us up, when we are listless; and comfort us, when we are sad; and put life into us, when we are dead; and make us not only able but willing to be Religious, being both our pleasure and our food.

Seneca, speaking of times of relaxation and rest from labours, saith, he knew some great Men, who once a Month would give themselves a day of play; and others that every Day would allow some Hours, wherein they would not so much as write a Letter, or meddle with any thing that had the show of business.

*L. de tranq.
animi.*

ness. If we in like manner did, though not every Day, yet every Month, take this sweet repast; if out of love to Christ, and consideration of our own necessities, we did lay aside all other thoughts, and give up our selves to those delightful Meditations, which here present themselves unto us; it would ease us of many cares and troubles, and make us more cheerfully do the will of God at other times, and dispose us to attend the whole business of Religion as the pleasure rather than the labour of our life.

But if you be cast into a place, where you have not the opportunity so frequently to celebrate the remembrance of Christ's death, by receiving the outward and visible signs and pledges of his Divine Grace; then you may the oftner communicate with him spiritually in your own heart, and represent his dying love as lively as you can to it, in your retired thoughts: Beseeching him to accept of your unfeigned desires, to make him your publick acknowledgments, and to join with all those pious Souls, which are then met together throughout the Christian World to show forth his praise, and to offer up themselves in holy love to him, and to our blessed Redeemer Christ Jesus. For which purpose

I would advise you to make use of all such Meditations, Prayers, and Thanksgivings, as are wont to precede and attend those Solemnities: altering only those words which relate to your actual receiving at the Table of the Lord.

And doubt not, I beseech you, but your devout addresses to him after that manner, with such pious thoughts, religious affections, and sincere resolutions to continue steadfast in his love and obedience, will be as well accepted by him at that time, as if your Body was actually present there, where your Soul is. The very disposing of your self for it, and ordering your Soul as if you were to receive the holy Communion in the same manner that others do, will certainly be a grateful sight to our dear Saviour; who spreads his love all the Christian World over: so grateful, that it will procure his favour as much, as the doing of the thing it self would, when it is not your fault that it is not done.

Moses, you may remember, appoints in his Law, that the Paschal Lamb (which was offered up in remembrance of God's miraculous mercy, that delivered them by strength of hand out of Egyptian Slavery, and was a representation of a greater salvation by Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, which

Advice to a Friend. 183

which taketh away the sin of the World) should be taken from the rest of the Flock on the Tenth Day of the Month, and so kept up in the House till the Fourteenth, (XII. *Exod.* 3. 6.) when it was to be killed and sacrificed. One reason which the Jewish Masters give of it is, that as the People hereby would have sufficient time to examine whether it was a *Lamb without blemish*; (v. 5.) so by the sight of it, for so long a time in the house, every Family might be excited to prepare themselves duly for the Holy Offices of that great Day. And they have formed this Maxim thereupon, that *he who strenuously prepares himself for observing the precept, or for a good work, is as he who performs the precept.* It is no less pleasing to God, they mean, for a Man to fit and dispose himself carefully in due time for a pious action (whereby he shows his mind, his will, and his heart to it) than the action it self would be; which he may not be able, by reason of sickness, or want of opportunity to perform. No question, *My Friend*, this Aphorism may safely be admitted here. You may rely upon it, in the case which I now suppose; and be confident that when you have fitted your self beforehand, and put all things in such order as you were wont a-

I

gainst

Gainst your approaches to the Table of the Lord, he will make account of it as if you had been present there, and actually joined in that Sacrifice, which in Christian Assemblies was then offered and commemorated. Especially when you do all those things at that time, which you would have done there, (excepting the outward receiving of the holy Bread and Wine) not omitting the giving something as an Alms and Oblation; for *we ought not* now, no more than they did heretofore, *to appear before the Lord empty*. Oblations were always a part of Divine Worship, joined with Prayer and Thanksgiving to God. And were either made at the time when the People offered up their supplications and acknowledgments, or vow'd to be made when their Petitions should be granted. The very making also of such oblations, is an act of thanksgiving and pious acknowledgment that we receive all good things from God, and hold them of him; and it hath the effect of a Prayer to him, that he will be pleased to continue them: as no doubt he will to all such devout worshippers of him. They may be confident he will not send them away empty, nor let that time be unprofitably imployed in his service. You have tried it, I perswade my self;

self; and have found your mind filled with a lively sense of him, and of his incomparable kindness to Mankind in Christ Jesus; and your heart replenished with a most ardent love to him, and with a perfect satisfaction in his love; and your whole Soul excited to as great care and delight in his service, as the remembrance of such an abundant grace of God will require.

For the benefit of a frequent commemoration, one way or other, of the wonderful love of our Lord in his Passion and Death for us, cannot fail to be exceeding great; for the better securing of our duty, and the making all those Counsels, which I have given you, the more effectual. It will put you in mind of the worth and dignity of your Soul; for which Christ hath done and suffered so much, and on whom he bestows such precious tokens of his love. It will quicken your love to him, which is the life of Religion. You shall taste how sweet it is, beyond all comparison, to be Religious; whereby we have such hope in God. There you shall be remembred how gainful it is to be good, beyond all the purchases of this World; for Christ imparts himself to you, and all his benefits. There you pray with the greatest devotion, and offer up Spiritual Sacrifices; and you represent

186 *Advice to a Friend.*

also the Sacrifice of Christ, to prevail for blessings for you. And there you are most likely to have the most plentiful communications of God's Holy Spirit to you; and to feel your Heart dilated in the largest affection unto Him. There you confirm your promises to God; and he seals his to you. You cannot there be of another judgment, if you would, than this; that since Christ died to give you life, you ought not henceforth to live to your self, but unto him which died for you, and rose again.

This, I make no doubt, is one reason, why those promises wherein Men stand engaged to God, are no better performed; because they do not frequently repeat this holy action, in the exercise of which, they find their hearts, at present, fully resolved for God and goodness. This is the cause that they waver again; and all their Promises and Vows wherein they bind themselves, fall off like cords of Vanity. Whereas, did they upon all occasions communicate with our Saviour, they would find their resolutions grow so strong and stedfast, that no temptation would be able to break them. They would be like Bands of Iron, or Chains, rather, of Gold; that would hold them for ever to their duty.

You

Advice to a Friend. 187

You have heard, I believe, the story of *Mithridates*; who by often use of the Antidote which he invented, so fortified his Spirits, that they resisted the force of all Poyson: Insomuch that when, to avoid the *Roman* slavery, he would have dispatched himself by a strong venomous draught, he was not able to effect it. Such a sovereign vertue you will find, in the frequent devout receiving of the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. It will secure the life of your Soul; confirm your strength; arm you against the bitings of the old Serpent; and make it, in a manner, impossible for you to be impoisoned, by any naughty affections.

But I have writ so much on this Subject, in other Books already, that I need not say any more of it here. You find, I hope, those Treatises useful to the stirring up Devotion, and to the making a Soul more forward and unwearied in God's service. And there likewise you may meet with a particular Prayer, for *Love to the Holy Communion*. So that I might immediately proceed, without any stop, to the next Advice; did I not consider that it may be very profitable, to furnish you with a *short Office*, as I may call it, to be used in your Closet, at the usual time of its publick Administra-

188 *Advice to a Friend.*

tion, when you want opportunity (in the place where you are) of receiving the holy Communion ; or are any way disabled from going to it, when it is there administred.

A PRAYER,

When one cannot publickly
Communicate.

A *L*mighty and most merciful Father, who art every where, and more especially nigh unto all them that call upon thee, to all that call upon thee in truth ; I prostrate my self before thy Majesty, in the deepest humility of Soul and Body, to beseech thy Grace and Favour towards me, in the Pardon of all my sins ; that they may not hinder the powerful presence of thy Holy Spirit with me at this time, to enable me to perform an acceptable service to thee, through Christ Jesus.

It is a great comfort to me to think, That unto thee all hearts be open, all desires known, and from thee no secrets are hid : For thou seest the desires that are in my Soul, to go with my Christian Brethren to wait upon thee at thy Altar, as well as in thy House ; there to commemorate the dying Love of my blessed

bleſſed Saviour towards me; to give him thanks and praiſe, for giving himſelf to be a Sacrifice for the ſins of the whole World; to repreſent unto thee that Sacrifice as a full ſatisfaction for them; humbly hoping thereby, for all the benefits of his Death and Paſſion: And together herewith to devote my ſelf with unfeigned love, in renewed Reſolutions of faithful Obedience unto thee; to unite my heart alſo in Brotherly Affection to all the faithful Servants of the Lord Jeſus; and to rejoice in the Holy Communion of him, and of all his Saints: that ſo I might receive increaſe of Power and Strength to walk worthy of this holy Fellowship, and to continue therein to my lives end.

And bleſſed be thy Name, O Lord, that I feel ſuch deſires; bleſſed be thy Name that I find my ſelf thus piously diſpoſed. Which being the effect of thy ſingular Grace; I hope it is an earneſt, that thou wilt ſupply the want of the outward means, by the inward operation of thy Holy Spirit: repreſenting to me ſo lively the Death and Paſſion of our Lord for my ſake; cleaſing the thoughts of my heart, and filling me with ſuch Faith in him, ſuch Love to him, and holy Reſolutions to be perfectly Devoted to him; that though I have not opportunity to receive thy Creatures of Bread and Wine, according to our Saviour's holy inſtitution,

yet having a remembrance of his Death and Passion, I may be partaker of his most blessed Body and Blood.

Who in the night when he was betrayed, took Bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it and gave it to his Disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my Body, which was given for you; Do this in remembrance of me. Likewise after Supper He took the Cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying; Drink ye all of this: for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of Sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.

Behold, O Lord my God, I now do this (which Thou hast commanded) in my mind and heart; in remembrance of that wonderful love, which made Him not only die, but be broken and crucified for me; desiring it may be most thankfully and joyfully commemorated every where, till his second coming; unto the great increase of true Devotion and sincere Obedience to Him in all things:

And therefore I beseech thee, That the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for me, may preserve my Body and Soul unto everlasting Life.

*For he is my Lord and only Saviour; unto
whose*

whose will I heartily submit; unto whose service I intirely devote my self; and upon whose meritorious Death alone I depend for remission of sins: And therefore let the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for me, preserve my Body and Soul to everlasting Life.

I am not worthy, I acknowledge, so much as to gather up the Crumbs under thy Table; not worthy so much as to be admitted to appear within the Doors of thy House.

But since it is thy property always to have mercy, and thou not only invitest those unto thee, who are sensible of their unworthiness, and who hunger and thirst after Righteousness; but hast promised to satisfie their Souls: I most humbly beseech thee, gracious Lord, to fill me with such an high esteem of my Love in Christ Jesus, and with such strong and vehement love to Thee and to all Goodness; with such fervent Charity towards my Brethren, and towards all Men; with such joy in remembering what our blessed Lord and Saviour hath done and suffered for me, and with such delight in doing whatsoever He would have me; that I may have this great satisfaction of believing, and sensibly perceiving, that I dwell in Christ, and Christ in me; and that I am one with Christ, and Christ with me.

192 *Advice to a Friend.*

*Thou dost assure us by thy Ministers * ;*
That if any Man by reason of
 * III. Rubrick
 after the Com-
 munion of the
 Sick.

some just impediment, do not
receive the Sacrament of
Christ's Body and Blood ; yet
if he do truly repent him of
his sins, and stedfastly believe that Jesus
Christ hath suffered Death upon the Cross
for him, and shed his Blood for his Re-
demption, earnestly remembring the be-
nefits he hath thereby, and giving him
heartly thanks therefore, he doth Eat and
Drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour
Christ profitably to his souls health, al-
though he do not receive the Sacrament
with his mouth.

O most gracious God, make me now to feel
the truth of all this, who am deprived of the
comfort of the Holy Sacrament ; but do truly
repent me of all my sins, and stedfastly believe
on Christ Crucified, and from his Blood, which
was shed for my Redemption, expect Remission
of Sins, the Holy Spirit and Eternal Bliss ;
thanking Thee, with all my Soul, for the pro-
misses he hath left us of these inestimable be-
nefits, and the assurances he hath given us
that he will make good his promises.

Which give me confidence to hope, that He
will now communicate himself unto me, and
make me as truly and profitably to partake of
his

Advice to a Friend. 193

his most precious Body and Blood, as if I had actually presented my self at thy Altar, to receive the holy Mysteries, as pledges of his love, from the hands of thy Minister.

Whose words of Absolution give me leave to apply to my self, and to hope it shall be made good to me: which is the summ of all my Desires.

Have mercy upon me, pardon and deliver me from all my sins, confirm and strengthen me in all goodness, and bring me to Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Thanksgivings.

Blessed be God, for those comfortable words, our Saviour Christ hath spoken to all that truly turn to him.

Come unto me all that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you, *Matth. xi. 28.*

So God loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son; to the end that all who believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life, *S. Joh. iii. 16.*

Blessed be his Divine Goodness for the glad tidings his Apostles have published, in such words as these:

This

194 *Advice to a Friend.*

This is a true saying, and worthy of all to be received, That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, *1 Tim. i. 15.*

If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, *1 S. Joh. ii. 1.*

H Y M N.

GLory be to God on high, and on Earth
peace, good-will towards men. I praise
thee, I bless thee, I worship thee, I glorifie
thee, I give thanks to thee (together with all
thy faithful Servants who are publicly ac-
knowledging thee) for thy great Glory, O
Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father
Almighty.

O Lord, the only begotten Son Jesus Christ,
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
that takest away the sins of the world, have
mercy upon me.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon me.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive my Prayer.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of God
the Father, have mercy upon me.

For thou only art holy, thou only art the
Lord,

Advice to a Friend. 195

Lord, thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

XIII.

IF so be you find your Dullness and backwardness to your Duty, at any time, continue so long and increase so much, that you are afraid there is danger in it, and it may prove pernicious to your Soul; then go and *take counsel of your spiritual Physician*, to whom I would have you open your case, as plainly and fully as you can. There is no small safety in taking a good Guide by the hand, at all turns, as you walk in your way to Heaven. But then especially, it is a necessary piece of wisdom to ask about your way betime, when you fear you may be out: and to open your grief at the beginning, when you are wounded with sad apprehensions; before the Sore fester.

And if your Physician or Director could be your Friend also, then you would have a three-fold advantage for your relief; by the advice of a good Man, a Friend, and one of God's Officers. For I believe the same words spoken by him, and by another, are not the same. They are the more acceptable

ceptable when they come from a Friend ; and carry the greater Authority from the Mouth of God's Minister. And therefore be no more backward to reveal the secrets of your Soul to Him, when it is beyond your own skill to heal your distempers ; than you are to let a Physician know those Maladies in your Body, which must be beholden to him for a Cure.

He may furnish you with incentives, if you need quickning. He may revive you, when you seem as if you were a dying. He may lend you his supports and comforts, when you are feeble and disconsolate. He may help you to distinguish between your fears and real dangers ; between your weakness and your wilfulness ; between your laziness, and your caution ; between your bodily and your spiritual infirmities. He will be as a good Pilot to steer your Soul, when you are tossed (like a Ship in a dangerous Sea and a dark Night) in the doubts and waverings of your own Mind. Yea, in your best estate, he may be of singular use to you, to keep you within the bounds of prudence ; that you be not overborn with the too violent gusts of your own awakened affections and desires. A Ship needs a Pilot in fair weather, as well as in a storm : when it hath a prosperous Gale,

Gale, as well as when it is driven with rough and furious, or with cross Winds: She may be in danger then by undiscovered Shelves and Rocks, or by carrying too great a Sail; as in the other case she is, by Tempests and Hurricans, which tear her Sails in pieces. And she must never fail at random, but steer to some certain Port; which cannot be performed without his direction, and must be the effect of his skilful guidance. Even so it is in the case of our Souls; which may be overturn'd in our spiritual fervours, unless we have some to manage us. When all things favour us, we may strain our selves too much and be overfet, if there be none to govern our Motions. Our zeal may be indiscreet, if we have not a wise and faithful Adviser. It may spend it self on little things, or those that are unprofitable, if there be none to give directions about it: Or it may drive at no certain end, but flote as it happens, unless some body sit at the stern, to order and rule it. We may hoise up too high a Sail, and by making too much hast be indangered; if we have not the assistance of one that can judge what we are able to bear, and that shall sometimes slacken us in our too speedy course. In short, a great deal of time may be spent,
in

in some cases, to small purpose ; without a greater prudence than our own, to husband it, and lay it out for us.

I must commend to you therefore the Rule, which one of the *Jewish* Doctors gave his Scholars (half of which you have had already) *Provide your self, of a good Teacher, and a good School-fellow.* A good Guide, and a good Companion, you will find exceeding useful to you. Especially the Guide ; who may sometime be your Companion too. Such the holy Scripture calls our *Leaders* (*Rulers* we render it, XIII. *Hebr.* 17.) the Conductors, and Governours of our motions, in the way to Heaven. Those that take us by the hand, as I said, both to guide and to support us : by their advice and counsel ; by their admonitions and exhortations ; by Prayer and Blessing ; by comforts and spiritual consolations. They are Ministers of the word ; Expounders of the Holy Books ; Monitors to our Duty ; Mediators with God ; and Dispensers of the Mysteries of Salvation. And therefore it will not be safe to travel without the Instructions of some or other of them. To whom when you have committed your self, look upon Him as your good Genius, or tutelar *Angel*, (by which Name the highest

highest Ministers in the Church are called) whom you would have as near you as you can ; and in whose company, and under whose care and tuition you may hope to arrive in safety at your Journeys end. To him it will be necessary to repair on all occasions, that He may instruct and teach you in that whereof you are Ignorant ; or awaken you, when you are sleepy ; or refresh and cheer you, when you are weary ; or cure you, when you are sick and ill at ease ; or resolve you in your doubts ; or quicken your dullness ; or bridle your fervours ; in short, that he may illuminate your mind to make a difference between truth and falshood, reality and appearance, good and evil, and excite your will to embrace the one, and refuse the other, with a constant affection.

For suppose (to give an instance) any Man should make a tendry to you of some Principles, which he labours to prove you ought to receive, as Articles of the Christian Faith. How can you be secure that you shall not drink in some poysonous Conceits, under the sugared Name of Truth ; unless you take advice of those, that have their Senses more exercised to discern, than your self ? And so, in all other cases, know for certain you will never be so well able

able to instruct and counsel your self, as they : never so well understand the Sacred Books, as by the help of their Interpretations : not be so well satisfied you do your duty, as by consulting with them, whose work it is to search and make enquiries into the Laws of God. Every Man may know so much of the Law, as to keep him from quarrelling, or trespassing upon his Neighbours: But he will not depend upon his own knowledge in every thing that concerns his estate, especially when any part of it is in dispute, or he would have it well settled according to his hearts desire. And though some ordinary things in Physick, the vertues of certain Herbs and Plants, may be understood by any Body with a little pains ; yet none will trust themselves, or their next Neighbours, in case of a sharp Disease, but send, if they be able, for a Man of the greatest repute in his faculty, to look after their health, and administer Medicines to them. Just thus it is in the case of our Souls: it is too much presumption and careless confidence, to rely upon our own counsel alone, in the settlement of our everlasting estate, or in the Cure of those Disorders and Distempers in our mind which threaten danger ; we ought to take good advice, and, for fear of mistake, have

have the judgment of some more skilful person to secure us, as well as our own.

And indeed, from hence you may learn what account God makes of your Soul (and how highly it ought to be valued by your self) for the safety of which He hath made such careful and plentiful provision. Having, next to the gift of his Son, and of the Holy Ghost, settled an order of Men to minister unto Souls; to look after them, and see that they do not perish, for want of instruction or good advice. As he would have our Saviour lay down his life for them, so he hath thereby, made him a most compassionate High-Priest, and preferred him to a Kingdom; which is nothing else but an Office, Power and Authority, to take care of Souls, and do them good continually. By vertue of which he hath committed Authority unto others in a perpetual succession, that they should *watch for Mens souls*, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* speaks: declaring to them their own worth, and his love; ingrafting that Word in them, which is able to save them; calling them to repentance; establishing them in the Faith; encouraging their Progress in vertue; ordering their goings; feeding them with his blessed Body and Bloud; absolving them from their sins; assisting them
in

in their last agony that they may finish their course with joy.

This is the effect of a peculiar kindness to Souls. He hath not dealt so with our Bodies: for we never heard of a Company of Men appointed by God to invent pleasures and contrive ways for the feasting of our Senses. There are none separated and set apart by him, to teach the World how to get Riches, and improve their Estates, and fill their Coffers. But all the Wisdom of Heaven is employed to other purposes: having ordained Men to teach us how to live above those things, and to replenish our minds with his knowledge, and our wills with his love. This he hath made their constant function, and perpetual employment, to the Worlds end.

And therefore be not slack to use their Ministry, nor doubt of the Blessing of God upon it. But have so much love to your Soul, as to apply your self to them for assistance, who are particularly concerned to give it: and so much love to God, as to be confident he will make those means successful, which he hath particularly ordained for your good.

A PRAYER.

I Adore Thee, O Lord, the Father of Mercies, who hast designed Mankind to the greatest felicity in everlasting Life. And hast not left us, in pursuance of it, to the uncertain guesses of our own Mind; but sent thy dear Son into the World, both to assure us of that happiness, and to direct us, by his holy Doctrine and Example, how we may attain it. Blessed be the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Son of Righteousness hath visited us from on high, to give light to them that sate in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. Great is thy love, O Lord, which, after he had left the World, sent his Apostles, and other Ministers of thy Word, to be the Messengers of Reconciliation and Peace, the Leaders and Conductors of Souls, the Stewards of thy Mysteries, and the Guides unto Blessedness. Great is thy love; which to this day continueth a merciful care over Souls; in providing a succession of faithful Pastors and Instructors, to teach us our duty, to reduce us when we go astray, to resolve us when we doubt, to help us when we are weak or weary; and by their counsels, admonitions and comforts, to bring our Souls back again safe to Thee, the Father of Spirits.

204 *Advice to a Friend.*

I see, O Lord, how dear and precious our Souls are in thy sight; for which our Saviour hath done and suffered so much, and employeth still the care and pains of so many Persons to take the charge and oversight of them, and guide them unto their Rest. My Soul blesses Thee, and all that is within me praises thy holy Name, as for all other thy Benefits, so for the many good Instructors I have met withal, the many good Lessons I have been taught, and the pious Councils and Advices I have received. I thank thee for putting me into the Hands of such friendly and skilful Guides; and that I have never hitherto wanted some to conduct me, in all the dangerous and troublesome passages of my Life. Be pleased still to favour me with the continuance of the like happiness: enduing me with wisdom to chuse, and grace to follow such a person, who may, on all occasions, clearly enlighten my understanding, settle my doubts, confirm my resolutions, quicken my endeavours, direct my zeal, keep all my passions in order, and secure my goings in thy paths. That so I may neither miss my way, nor proceed with irregular motions, nor be discouraged in it: but hold an even, steady and constant course in well doing: till they to whom thou hast committed the care of me deliver me up in peace and safety, into the hands
of

of the great Shepherd, and Bishop of our Souls,
Christ Jesus. To whom be Glory and Domi-
nion for ever. Amen.

XIV.

BUT when you are in your best moods,
and think your self furthest off from
danger, it would be good to *exercise an*
Holy Fear and Jealousie over your self; lest
you should give way to any thing, which
may make you grow worse. Remember
how false and treacherous the conquered
Enemy is; and therefore it ought to be
narrowly watch. Though it promise fair,
Remember that you must not trust it with-
out a constant Guard. And mark the least
beginnings of an evil, for fear, if they be
sighted as small faults, they draw you into
a greater. Though we must not be de-
jected for our little irregularities, yet we
must not pass them over neither, without a
serious observance. If a Father laugh or
smile when he chides a wanton Child, it
is so far from being a check to his follies,
that it doth the more embolden him to
play those idle tricks, for which he is re-
proved. And so it is to be feared we shall
find our selves disposed; if we be not in
good

good earnest displeased at our selves for any thing that borders upon Vice, and do not reprove our selves seriously for making too much use of our liberty: We may be in danger by this mildness and gentleness, to take the boldness to proceed to further transgressions.

But I may seem to forget to whom I write; and considering what a great quantity you have of this fear, I had need give it a large dash of some other mixture; lest it turn into timorousness, and hurt your Soul. And this indeed is the skill we should all learn; to behave our selves with such caution and evenness in the exercise of fear, that it do not make us Superstitious, nor, through a despondency of Spirit, cast us into that dullness and weakness, which we are striving to avoid. You must let your *Fear* therefore be tempered with so much of a Divine *Faith*; that like heat and moisture they may make up one healthful constitution.

Faith in God, I say, is another thing that you must carefully and daily foster in your Soul; if you would be constant in his Service. Be verily perswaded that he loves you infinitely more, than you love him; and therefore is more desirous, than you can be, to see you do well and continue in well-

well doing to the end. Think that his eye is upon you ; that his arm is under you ; that he is as near to you as you are to your self: for, in all regards, we live and move, and have our Being in Him. Think therefore that you behold Him, the Father of Lights, sending in rays of light into your mind, as you see the Sun looking in at your Windows, and filling the Room with its chearful beams: and that you feel Him pouring in life constantly into your will, as the Heart spurts out blood into all the Arteries of the Body. Never entertain such a thought of Him, as though he was willing to desert you, and cast you out of his friendship ; now that he hath done so much for you, and you have been so long acquainted. By no means hearken to any jealous thoughts, that are but whispered of his goodness; whatsoever the jealousies be, which you have of your own inconstancy.

Was it not He that called us, when we were in horrid darkness and forgetfulness of him ; bending all our thoughts and desires to our own ruine and dishonour ; Was it not He that assisted us to get the victory over so many Enemies ; Who but He is it, that hath hitherto enabled us, in our study to live virtuously, and please Him in all things? What should now move

K

him

him to alter his mind? After such numerous tokens of his love, what is it should make him hate us? Will he bear with no weakneses; or shall a fault that we have committed, wholly alienate his affection from us? If when we lay in our filthiness, he took pity on us, pulled us out of the Mire, and laid us in his bosom; now that we are washed all over, will he shake us off, and cast us out of his embraces, because our Feet (as our Lord speaks) still need some washing? He that invited us so kindly when we were strangers, and took us into his house, and made us become not his servants only, but his Children; will he now turn us out of doors presently, and thrust us into the wide World again, because we have offended Him? When he had no strength, did he inspire us, and hath he thus long tenderly followed us, and trained us up in his service; and will he now forsake the conduct of us, and abandon us to the mercy of our Enemies? Why did He then with so much labour purchase our love? Why hath He been at such vast expence on our account? Why would He take such incredible care to lose us, when we might have perished by his no care of us?

○ unworthy thoughts of so gracious a Master, so loving a Father, so tender a Husband!

Husband ! Rather let us think the Sun may refuse to rise and shine upon us, or the Sea may be dried up ; than imagine that He should be willing to cast us into our former darkness, and not let the current of his grace still run towards us. Let us at least make him as good as an ordinary Mother, who not only suckles her Child when it is young, and indures many tedious Days and wearisome Nights, in the midst of its cries and froward humours ; but likewise loves and looks after it when it can go alone, and make some provision for its own good and safety. Far be it from us to make him like the silly Birds, that attend their young no longer than they are in the Nest, and leave them to shift for themselves, when they have once taught them to use their Wings. Will not the Divine love, think you, indure far more untowardness, peevishness and waywardness in our hearts, when our grace is but in its infancy and childhood ; than a tender Mother indures in her little one, before it can speak and tell its mind ? And will he not bear then with some indiscretions or faults afterwards ; but cast us out as *Sarah* did *Ishmael* and the Handmaid into a Wilderness ; where there is no provision for us ? Nay, will He that took compassion on that poor out-cast and

210 *Advice to a Friend.*

his Mother, to whom he sent his Angel for their preservation, leave his dear Children to become a prey to the wild Beasts of the Desert? Far be it from the Father of Mercies, the God of love and all comfort, to deal so with us.

And let me tell you that, the more confidence we repose in his love, the more he hates to use us so unkindly. What man is there so hard-hearted, that seeing his Neighbour ready to fall and hurt himself, will deny him his help, and withdraw his support; especially when he falls into his arms, and desires wholly to lean Himself on his Breast; Who can indure to fail a Man, and let him be undone; that comes and puts his Estate and his Life into his hands, though otherwife he be undeserving? If a poor Bird fly to us for protection from the ravenous Kite that persecutes it, Can we find in our hearts to throw it into its Enemies claws? Who can then suspect, that God who hath declared himself otherways willing to do us good; should then cast us off and forsake us, when we altogether rely upon his goodness, clemency, wisdom and power to help and relieve us; When we fly to none else for shelter; when we say as *David* doth (LXXI. *Psal.* 1, 2, 5.) Truly my Soul waiteth upon God, from Him cometh

cometh my Salvation: He only is my rock and my salvation, he is my defence; The rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God: Who can let it enter into his thoughts, that then He will turn away from us, and suffer us to be greatly moved?

But more than this; there is no Man among us, unless he will make himself most infamous, can fail and desert another; who, upon his earnest invitation, and kind profers of security, comes and puts Himself wholly under his Wing, and trusts to his Covert for safe protection. Men are not arrived yet at such inhumanity; but are ashamed to be so barbarous, as to inveigle Men with fair promises and shows of kindness to come, and take Sanctuary with them, and then betray them. Let the Lord of Heaven then never be held in the least suspicion of such unfaithfulness as well as unkindness to us, whom he hath invited and perswaded to confide and put their whole trust in him. Never so much as imagine, that he will disappoint those good Souls, that rely and depend on nothing in their obedience to him, but his undoubted promises. Let it not come into any of our minds (or let the thought of it be abhorred and rejected with indignation) that after he hath made us such assurances of his Care

212 *Advice to a Friend.*

and Love, he will break his word, and let us fall, when we have fast hold of his Mercy and his Truth. Men may prove false and treacherous: there may be such Monsters whose kindnesses are but flatteries, and their invitations but insnarements: But faithfulness it self cannot be unfaithful; God's Goodness cannot mock us; His infinite perfections will not let Him have any unworthy designs upon us, or any ways delude us.

What? deceive a Confident, and fail a Friend? — Such God is pleased to esteem us, when we devote our selves in love to his Service: which is a farther consideration, of greater moment than any else, to secure us of his faithful kindness. For if our heart will not serve us, to let a poor neighbour fall to the ground, when we can easily support him; much less to desert one that hath intirely trusted us with all he hath, and who by our desire reposed this trust in us; then least of all can we be inclined to abandon the care of him, who by long conversation with us, and experience of us, is become our Friend. This gives him a new and a stronger title to all that we can do for him; and because we have been so kind, will be the best reason why we should continue to be so still. Consider but the
Natural

Natural works of God ; doth He begin to form the life of a Child in the Womb, and leave it before it become a perfect Creature ? yea, if it be but a Chicken in an Egg, doth he not bring it to its full growth ; unless (in either case) something extraordinary hinder ? Why then should we dream that he will desist, and forsake the formation of his Son Christ in us ; the lively Image of whom he hath already begun ? It must be some strange violence which we offer to our selves, some very ill use of our Souls, and great straining of the conscience, that can make us miscarry.

I have askt the Question, you know, elsewhere, and let me briefly repeat it again in this place ; Who was it that bid S. Peter to walk upon the Water ? At whose command did his body, though apt to sink like a stone, tread in that soft and yielding Element ? Was it not our Saviour that said, *Come* ? and that was enough. His word made the Floods that they could not swallow him up. He felt no more difficulty or danger in those paths, as long as he believed our Saviour's Power, than if he had walked on dry Land. Then it was that he began to sink, when his faith turned into fear. His heart sunk before his body ; and his courage yielded before the Waters.

214 *Advice to a Friend.*

Just so it is with us, who are compounded of earthly materials, and yet are bid to wade through this World to Heaven. A Miracle it is, that our dull Nature which hangs downward, and is inclined to sink into the soft delights of sense, should be able to look up above, and not be swallowed up in a gulph of sin and misery. For this we stand indebted to the Divine Power, upholding and aiding our weakness. And He that hath called us, as he did *Peter*, and bid us come to him, continues his mighty word with us, and bids us go on in the ways of his Commandments. What need we fear, as long as we have him in our company, to go long with us? And when is it that we are in danger of drowning, but when we grow diffident, (as *St. Peter* did) and our minds are fixed more upon the Wind and the Waves, the hardships and the hazards, that threaten us, than upon the grace and power of our Lord, that takes the charge of us?

And yet if through our fearfulness and distrust, we chance to stagger and waver in our resolution; we are not utterly undone, but have a Remedy very near us. Our Lord will put forth his hand, even in the midst of these fears, and hold us up, as he did that faint-hearted Disciple of his,
when

when we cry out to Him in his words, *Lord save me.*

It is stoutly resolved by an Heathen, that seeing all disorders in Man arise, partly from the weakness of those reasons that are in his mind, and partly from the excessive abundance of gross matter, to which he is chained; and seeing those Reasons and Notions are Divine, and near of Kin to the Gods themselves; the insuperable and irresistible power of

the Gods will come to the assistance of their Kindred, and so revive and renew those Reasons, so comfort and che-

*Proclus L. I. in
Timæum. Ἀναστα-
σίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων
ἐκ τῆς ἀναισθησίας,
καὶ τῆς ἀκατα-
στάσεως, &c.*

rish their weakness, that they shall be able to conquer the heaviness and dullness of the bodily impediments. Let us much more resolutely conclude, that seeing our Souls (though here in this Prison) are the offspring of God, and seeing likewise he is manifested in our flesh, and hath married it (as I may say) to himself; he will mightily encourage and strengthen the one, and help us to disburden the other, and purifie both: and that he will never despise the faintest essays of any honest Soul that faithfully struggles for greater liberty; but assist in all its attempts and endeavours,

216 *Advice to a Friend.*

to be unloaded and made more free and chearful in his service. These very motions derive themselves from Heaven; and may as confidently expect to be succoured from thence, as a Child to receive relief from his Parents when he is in distress, and when, by their order also, he is engaged to apply his weakness to a mighty work, which without their help, they know cannot be accomplished. It is incredible that the Father of Mercies should expose that which is born of him, to be undone and perish; which will certainly be the fate of all that is good in us, without his constant care and assistance for its preservation. Do not doubt, but God will look after his own, and see that the little portion of Goodness which is remaining in this World, be countenanced and encouraged. In assurance of which, you may address your self unto him, after this manner.

A PRAYER.

O Lord; who hast breathed into me the breath of life, and indwelt me with an Immortal Spirit; which looks up unto thee, and remembers its bonds; assist mine own Image, and that thou wilt save Jesus Christ

Christ from Heaven to repair and renew that Image in wisdom, righteousness and holiness: Behold with grace and favour the ardent desires which are in mine heart, to recover a perfect likeness of Thee. By thine Almighty Love, all Praise be unto Thee, my mind is already awakened to some sense of Thee; and my will overcome to yield up it self intirely to obey Thee; and I have been assisted hitherto in performing my duty to Thee. Yea, I have tasted so often how gracious thou art; that I account thy service the most perfect freedom, and find that in keeping of thy Commandments there is great reward.

My Hope is, that thou, Lord, who hast never failed those that seek thee, wilt perfect that which concerneth me, and not forsake the works of thine own hands. It is Thee whom my Soul seeketh; that I may have a more lively and prevailing sense of Thee, that I may most ardently love Thee, and constantly adhere to thy will, and do Thee honour by a chearful observance of all thy Commands. And from Thee it is that I have received these good inclinations, and holy desires. They are the fruit of thy love, and therefore cannot but be thy delight: which makes me still trust in Thee, that thou wilt rejoice over me, and do me good.

Psal.
9.10.
12.11.
138.8.

218 Advice to a Friend.

I have thy Word to incourage me, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. And I know that thy Word is true from the beginning: and that thy faithfulness is unto all Generations. They are not the things which thou hast never promised us that I came to beg of Thee; riches, honours, long life, or the rest of the goods of this World (for which I refer my self to thy wisdom, to give me what portion of them thou pleasest) but thy Holy Spirit, which my Saviour hath told me thou wilt as readily give to those that ask it, as a tender-hearted Parent will give food to his hungry Children, when they cry unto him. I desire only that thy own life may be nourished and protected in me, and vanquish all its enemies, and be compleated in a blessed Immortality. I beg of thee more of the Grace of Humility of Meekness, of Temperance, of Patience, of Brotherly kindness, and of Charity. Endue me with moderate desires of what I want, and a sober use of what I enjoy, with more contentedness in what is present, and less solicitude about what is future; with a patient mind to submit to any loss of what I have, or to any disappointment of what I expect; with a pious care to improve my precious time in all other actions of a Christian life; and with a willingness to conclude my days, and return
back

back to thee, to be with Christ, which is best of all.

Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness, in these things, be for my comfort, according to thy Word unto thy Servant. I entreat thy favour with my whole Heart: Be merciful unto me according to thy Word: Which hath pronounced those blessed that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and promised that they shall be filled. Fill me, O Lord, with the knowledge of thy will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Fill me with goodness, and the fruits of righteousness. And fill me with all joy and peace in believing, that thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me; but make me perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle me, and be my God for ever and ever: my Guide even unto Death; Amen.

119. Psal.

58. 76.

1 Colof. 9. 1.

Phil. 1. 15.

Rom. 13. 14.

1 Pet. 5. 10.

48. Psal. 14.

XV.

AND now is there any need to use many words, to show how much force there is in the Mediation of Death to make you lively? it is the common opinion, that all things intend themselves more

more earnestly, and act in the extremity, when they meet with their contrary, which threatens their destruction : As Springs are hottest in the coldest seasons, and Fire it self most scorching in frosty weather. Even so if we set Death very seriously before our mind, and laid the thoughts of it close to our hearts, would it cause our life to be more full of Life. We should gather together all our might, to do as much as we can ; if we lookt upon our selves, as going to the Grave ; where there is no work to be done at all.

The mind of Man is too apt to feed it self with the fancy of several pleasures, that either Nature affords, or Art hath invented. Among all which a good natur'd mind finds none so delicious ; as the conceit which frequently starts up in it, of the excessive pleasure he should enjoy, were he always in the company of a Friend whom he loves intirely, and might they spend their days, even as they list themselves, and dispose of all their Hours according to their own inclinations. But if a thought of Death interpose it self when he is in the height of this delight, it dashes all these fine Bubbles of the imagination in pieces : All's gone, and vanishes into a sigh ; or there is nothing of them remains,

remains, but a drop as big as a tear. And therefore if it be so sharp a curb to the forwardness of our desires, and serve as a Bribe to hold in our head-strong Passions; we may use it also as a good Spur to prick them on, when they are too sluggish, and to stir them up when they have no list to move at all.

When we are ready to fall asleep, did we but think of dying, it would make us start and say, Who would sleep and dream away his time in this manner, when, for any thing he knows, he hath but a few Sands left in his Glass? Death is coming to draw the Curtains about me, and to make my Bed for me in the dust; Awake then, up, and be doing, because there is a long Night near at hand, wherein we must rest and not work. And is it not a very great grace, if for so small, so short a work, we shall receive so vast, so long a reward? It is a great shame to stand all the day idle, if it be but for this very reason, that our best diligence, though it could be continued for many more years than it is like to be, can never deserve such a recompence.

Place your self therefore, as if you were upon your Death-bed, and think with what ardent desires, with what passionate groans, with what an heart full of sighs, you would seek

seek after God, if your Soul was just taking its flight out of this Body, and perhaps this will send it out beforehand in the like sighs and groans, which will help to waft you towards Heaven. Just as when a Man is to write to the dearest Friend he hath in the World, and thinks they are the last Lines that ever he shall send him; his very heart dissolves and drops it self into his Pen: So would all our affections melt and flow forth towards God, if we seemed to our selves as if we should never speak to him more with a Tongue of Flesh, nor look upon him through these Windows of Clay; but should shortly dwell in silence, and go down into the House of Darkneſs. O how would our Souls *thirst for God* (as *David* speaks) *for the living God!* How much should we love him, and endeavour to confirm our friendship with him! that when our Bodies are disposed of into the Earth, our Souls might still live and rejoice with Him in Heaven; expecting also a blessed Resurrection.

And if you say that in this state of dullness, that I am speaking of, a Soul is fit to think of nothing; this thing will tell you how it alarms the heart, and makes it muster up its thoughts, and collect its scattered Forces, that it may be in a readiness to

receive

receive the approaches of Death, and its assault upon us. And the thoughts of it, at such a time, are the more natural and easie, because there is nothing more like to Death than this unactive and sluggish temper; when the Soul seems as if it were buried in the Body, and intombed already in this Vault of Flesh.

And it would be very easie to show how much every one of the foregoing counsels would be improved, by our frequent conversation, on all occasions, with our Graves. It would excite our minds to enquire after another World; and make us very desirous to find it out. It would raise our esteem of the great love of God, who hath given us such assurance of a never-dying life. It would carry away our thoughts from this Earth, as not the place of our settled abode. It would presently send them above; and bid them see the pleasures which we do but imagine here, in their full growth, and perfection of joy and happiness there. O how delightful would Religion and Vertue be unto us, which is the only thing we can carry away with us? How curious should we be to judge aright, that Death may not be the first thing that shall undeceive us? How would it open our heart, as I said, to pour out it self in
devout

224 *Advice to a Friend.*

devout affections to God? and what a comfort would these be to us, if the records of them were spread before us at our dying hour? This is so far from being an enemy to cheerfulness, that it is a forcible reason why we should freely enjoy all that God hath given us, because we must shortly leave it. Our Friends also we shall therefore be enclined to embrace more ardently, and do them the more good, and covet their company, because we have not long to stay with them. For when I said the thoughts of Death are apt to restrain our too forward desires, I did not mean that it checks or abates our love to our Friends. No; *Love is strong as Death, and hard (or unyielding) as the Grave; the Coals thereof are Coals of Fire, a most vehement flame; as Solomon speaks, VIII. Cant. 6. It burns,* that is, like the Fire on the Altar (for in the *Hebrew* the last words are; *the Flame of God*) which came down from Heaven and never when out. Nothing can conquer it, no not Death which conquers all Flesh. That can only teach us not to place our chief contentment in any thing here; no, not in the best good in this World, though never so dear unto us because it may shortly leave us only its shadow, the Image of it in our memory; which putting us in

mind

mind of our forepast pleasures will make us so much the more sad, if we have not hope to find that good improved, by its departure from us, in another World. And is not the use of a Friend then most visible, when we think of our departure, by whom as I said, in one of the former Discourses, we shall still remain with those whom we leave behind? But what Friend is there like to our blessed Lord; whose loss we shall the oftner remember by commemorating his Death, if we think of our own? We cannot chuse but be excited to prepare our selves thereby, for an happy and cheerful dissolution. And why should we not trust God with all we have for a little time, whom we must shortly intrust with Soul and Body to all Eternity? But I list not to prolong this Discourse, with such collections as these; which I will leave to your own thoughts, with this Prayer, wherewith you may awaken your mind, when you find it necessary.

A P R A Y E R.

Thou art worthy, O Lord, of all Praise, Glory and Honour; by whose Omnipotent Will, and for whose pleasure, all things

226 Advice to a Friend.

in Heaven and Earth were created, and by whose indulgent Providence they are continually maintained and preserved. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a Garment:

102. Psal. 36.

73. 26.

as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

But thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no end, I prostrate my self before Thee in an humble sense, that I am but sinful dust and ashes; who have nothing to glory in, neither riches, nor strength, nor wisdom; but only this (O how happy is it for me!) that I know thee, the ever-living God, the Rock of Ages, the only solid foundation of our comfort and joy, who when my Flesh and my Heart faileth, wilt be the strength of my heart, and my Portion for ever.

I am now presenting my Soul and Body to Thee, in perfect health: but cannot tell where I shall be the next moment, or whether I shall live to breath out the desires of my Soul, once more, unto Thee. For in thy hand is the breath of our Nostrils, and when thou pleasest we are turned to destruction. We dwell in Houses of Clay, whose foundation is in the dust; and they are daily crumbling and mouldering away, so that we know not how soon they will vanish and be seen no more. O how serious should the thoughts of this make me in all my addresses

addresses unto thee? How dead to all the sinful enjoyments of this World? How holy and pure? How heavenly minded and spiritual? How ready to do good, and to communicate to others those things which I must shortly leave? How diligent to assure my self thereby of better enjoyments, and to make friends in Heaven; that when I go hence I may be received into everlasting Habitations?

I see, O Lord, now that I think of my departure, how unprofitable my too many cares are for the things of this life: How vain my eager desires after unnecessary riches and honours: how trifling all my pleasures; and that there is no solid happiness but in thy love, and a pious hope of immortality. O my God, be so good to me as to turn my thoughts frequently toward my latter ends and to fix in my mind a lively sense of the uncertainty of my being, and the fickleness of all things belonging to it. That since I must shortly leave them all, even my dearest Friends and Kindred, and this Body too, (which must be turned into corruption) I may most zealously endeavour to secure thy love and friendship in a better life, by the constant chearful and earnest exercise of all godliness and vertue, while I tarry here.

Help me to be as humble and lowly as the dust to which I am going: to bury all anger, hatred,

228 Advice to a Friend.

2 Sam. 14. 14. hatred, and enmities, since we must needs die, and be as Water spilt upon the Ground, which cannot be gathered up again: to discharge my mind of all superfluous cares, and of immoderate love of dying things: to enjoy them innocently and cheerfully: to do good with them heartily, and to envy no Man's greater prosperity: to suffer evil, and to take the loss of them patiently: to admire that mercy which still prolongs so frail a life as mine is: and especially to admire the gracious terms of thy Holy Gospel, which, for our short labours or sufferings here, hath promised us the reward of an endless life in a better place. Dispose me likewise to be willing to leave this World, and to be always in a readiness for my departure: that I may never be surprised with sudden Death nor obey thy summons with an haughty heart; but freely resign my spirit unto Thee, who gavest it.

O how much do I desire the continuance of these holy thoughts and inclinations: that so I may have such a love to this world, as is consistent with my hope of Heaven; and be so busied in earthly affairs, that my heart may be there, where my treasure is; and be tyed to my friends in such affection, that we may not be eternally divorced. And the nearer I draw to that eternal World, O that I may

Advice to a Friend. 229

be the more pure and separated from all worldly mixtures; and the clearer sight and prospect I may have of my happiness; and attain the greater assurance of thy love; and be the fuller of joy in hope of thy glory. Pity my present weakness; increase my strength; help me not only to resist, but to overcome all temptations; enable me to discharge the duties of my several relations; prepare me for all varieties of conditions; that in prosperity I may not forget Thee, nor imagine in adversity that thou forgettest me; but in all I may be the same, and have the same thoughts of Thee, love to Thee, and delight in Thee, till I come to an unchangeable goodness and happiness with the Lord Jesus. Amen.

XVI.

BUT if you be so much discomposed at any time, that you cannot get your thoughts close to this business, nor find any relief in any of the foregoing counsels; I must then, in the last place, send you to a never failing remedy; which is, to Exercise a great deal of patience towards your self. I am so well assured of your goodness, and that my judgment is not herein blinded by my affection to you, that I dare

230 *Advice to a Friend.*

dare conclude with this Advice: *Be content to be dull sometimes, and able to do nothing as you would; and yet do not think the worse of your self for it.* But if it do stir up any suspicions in your mind, of you do not know what fault; yet never bluster at your self, but with a calm and gentle spirit suffer this distemper. Look upon your self as sick, and think that it is not good now to stir any humours. And therefore strive not too much neither with your self [do not distrust this counsel] when you are thus melancholy; for that will but cast you more into it. You will be the sooner eased, if you do as well as you can; and add not a greater load to your spirit, by your own fretfull thoughts at this untoward indisposition.

You must consider that our Bodies being a part of this World, will be obnoxious to those changes which are in things adjacent to them. And that your Soul being united to your Body, cannot but feel its vicissitudes: Just as when the House smoaks, the Inhabitant is offended, unless he can step out of Doors.

Consider also that the same work is not required of a weak, and of a stronger Person. The *Nemalim* and the *Gemalim* (as the Jews speak) must not be a like loaded: that

that is, the Ants cannot carry such a Burden as the Camels.

You must thank God it is no worse with you; and that you have not quite forgot Him. Thank him, I say, that you have any use of patience, and that you are not under an absolute stupidity.

Remember likewise that it will be better with you. As long as there is the same Sun in Heaven, the Clouds will be dispersed, and we shall have fair days as well as foul: and as long as our Lord lives and changes not, there will be a brighter season, and we shall be warm as well as cold.

Think likewise how unworthy the best of us is, to live always under the Sun-beams. And that as there are many Countries more North than *England*, who in the depth of our Winter, are in a long and dismal Night: so there are many Souls who are in a colder case, and more remote from the Sun of righteousness, than yours is.

But however think, that after you have done what you can, it is the will of God that you should be as you are. And if this dullness please him, it need not displease you.

Remember also, that he is not perfect in patience, who can bear with others, but not with himself.

And again, that there is good reason you

L

should

232 *Advice to a Friend.*

should bear with your self; because accidentally this dullness will breed a greater activity, when you come out of it: Both out of justice, that you may make some recompence for that drowiness; and out of gratitude to him, by whose goodness you were delivered from it. For Nature, you know, instructs us to be very kind to those who have helpt us out of a very great distress; and it is not easie, to blot their readiness to relieve us out of our memories.

And besides, it is manifest there are some kinds of dullness and indisposition, which arise from the meer necessity of Nature: With which we can no more reasonably quarrel; than we do because it rains or snows, when we would have it fair weather. Can it be expected, for instance, that a Woman with Child should be so vigorous as she was wont? She must be content perhaps to spend that time in vomiting, which once she did in praying. It must not put her to pain in this case, that she cannot read or think so long, or with so much delight, or with such clearness of understanding as formerly she could: but she must comply with her condition, and considering no more can be done in such circumstances, believe that God requires no more. There is as much reason to be troubled

troubled, because she hath not Wings to fly, or cannot walk now as fast up her stairs, as when she had no burden : as to chide her self that she cannot be so earnest, so long, so chearful as formerly in the performance of Holy Duties.

There are many cases like to this; in which there is no more caution necessary, but to see that too much care of our ease, and indulgence to our present infirmity (which must at such a time be liberally allowed) do not tempt us to be negligent in that which it is in our power to perform. We may often retire to God in shorter thoughts, and affectionate longings and pantings after him; and thereby keeping our hearts in a glowing temper, we may prevent that chiliness and laziness, which otherwise might creep upon us, and make us imagine ourselves less able than we are. And particularly I would advise you, on such occasions, to lift up your Soul frequently to God in earnest desires, beseeching Him to preserve you from cheating your self; and that he would help you to discern clearly when it is the flattery, and when it is the meer weakness of Flesh and Blood, that hinders you from doing as you were wont.

When you cast a glance, I say, towards Heaven, and send up a sigh thither now

234 *Advice to a Friend.*

and then, (as you are able) let this be one of your desires, that God would be so gracious, as to give you to feel plainly, when meer necessity requires your attendance on your Body, and when it calls for more than it needs. For he loves that in every thing we should make known our requests to Him, and will certainly some way or other satisfie your mind in such concernments. And when you have used the best judgment you have and can procure, together with your Prayers, about them; then I hope you will be chearful, and let your thoughts trouble you no more. Or if a thought should happen to start up and strike your mind, telling you that you are lazy; yet believe, I beseech you, your more deliberate, and not these suddain conclusions.

There is one case, I know, of this kind, wherein though it be certain that it is impossible for us to do as we were wont, and that we are not hindred by any fault in our will, but by the meer indisposition of nature, yet it may be hard sometime to avoid dejected and complaining thoughts upon this account: It is in sickness; when the Mind necessarily languishes with the Body. You may chance then to imagine that some sin or other is the cause of this Correction, (and so you have drawn this disability up-
on

on your self) for which you cannot now be humbled as you desire. But I hope, *My Friend*, that you take such an exact view of your life, that sickness will not let you see any fault, that was not visible to you before. And I know you to be wiser, than to torment your self with a fancy that there is some sin lurking in you, though you cannot find it out. But if any thing should discover it self to you, which was not so evident before; let me beseech you, not to pass any hard censure upon your self. But to remember that this hath been bewailed whensoever you lamented the general infirmity of your nature; and that now perhaps it is represented to you more ugly than it doth deserve, or if it be not, yet it is sufficient only to beg of God to accept your hearty confession and your promise of amendment (when you are able) and to desire your spiritual guide to be the witness of your sincere resolution, and to give you absolution, and his blessing; and so rest satisfied.

But there may be another reason likewise assigned of our heaviness, at certain seasons, which I have not yet named: and that is, the with-holding, in a great measure, of that strength and power which was upon us from the Holy Ghost, to raise

236 *Advice to a Friend.*

and elevate us to an high pitch of love, activity, and joy in well-doing. For as the help of that doth lift us up above our selves, so, when it much abates, we are apt to fall as much below our selves; and to be surpris'd with sadness and dejection of spirit, to see our selves so strangely changed. And this may be denied us for several causes; either because we have not improved it so well as we might; or because our Lord sees that our Nature cannot bear always such extraordinary motions; or that he may make us more sensible of his favours, and raise their price and value in our esteem; or that he may try our strength, as a Mother lets go her hold of the Child, to make it feel its feet; or that he may thereby bow our wills more absolutely to his, and break our self-love, which desires nothing but pleasure; or that he may prove whether we will love him for himself, and not for the delicate entertainments which he gives us; or for some such cause unknown to you and me, and every body else.

And shall we not yield submission quietly, to a thing for which there may be so many reasons: and those not at all to our prejudice, but to our profit? Let me say a few words concerning the two last things mentioned; and show you that if our Pa-
tience

tience be exercised upon those accounts, it will prove very beneficial to our Souls.

I cannot say (as some have done) that we ought not to desire goodness for our own good, but meerly because it is pleasing to God. No; this seems to me a very absurd doctrine, and utterly impossible that we should separate these two; Piety, and our own good. We cannot so much as desire to be good, but we shall feel a satisfaction in it. For the very Name of good carries a respect in it, to something in us to which it is agreeable and convenient. We do not mean when we bid you love God for himself, that you should not therein love your self, and seek your own contentment; for you cannot chuse but be pleased in the love of God and vertue. But this I may affirm with safety; that there may be sometimes too much of self-love in our vehement desires after the extraordinary pleasures and joys of piety: and that if we could be content, after we use due diligence, with our *driness* and *barrenness* of spirit, with our *dulness* and *want of vigour*, nay, with our *frailties* and *faults* too, meerly out of submission to God, and because he thinks not fit to give us the pleasure of being wholly without them; it would be highly acceptable to

238 *Advice to a Friend.*

him, and no less advantageous to us. If in all things, I mean, we could rest satisfied that God's will is done, though ours be denied, if we could forbear to prosecute our own will even in those matters, and desire him to give us as much Life, and Spirit, and chearfulness and joy as he pleases; we should be so far from offending him, that he would take it for a very grateful piece of service to him.

This is not to teach any remissness in your desires and endeavours; but it supposes you do your best, and only advises you, that if notwithstanding you cannot be as you would, you do not let your spirit fall into any impatience or fretfulness. For this is to prefer God's pleasure above your own. It is a subjection of your will to his, in those points wherein you are most desirous to have it gratified. It is an unusual instance of resignation to him; which declares there is nothing so dear to you, but you are willing to quit it, so you may but do well, and be accepted with Him.

And here remember these two things: *First*, that our solid comfort doth not depend upon doing every thing so readily, easily and delightfully as we would; but in accomplishing God's will however it be done. And secondly, That *Humility, Patience and Submission to God*

God in the midst of our infirmities, may be more acceptable to him than that complacency and joy which we feel to arise meerly from the sense that we have of our strength and abilities. To be pleased in our successes is not so pleasing to God, as to be patient in our Contests. Nay, to rejoice and triumph in our Victories, is nothing so good, as to be constant and resolved, notwithstanding that we are a little overcome. In those spiritual consolations which we thirst after, we do not always receive so much profit as we do pleasure: but in the want of them, if our wills be thereby more perfectly subdued to his, we receive both a very great benefit, and in the issue, no small pleasure.

You have seen perhaps, or you may imagine, the smoke of a Potters Furnace; how thick and black it is, as if it would make a Picture of Hell it self. Who would think that the Vessels of Clay, which are baked there, would not be burnt to ashes by the fury of the Fire; or that at least they would come out as black as soot, by the foulness of the smoak? And yet when the Fire is put out, and the Vessels unfurnaced, you see there is no such thing: But that which was soft and yielding, is become hard and strong; and its complexion likewise is so much mended, that a Prince need not

disdain the use of some of these Cups. Just thus it is with a distressed Soul, when it is covered with a Cloud, and wrapt in darkness; and burns thereby in a great and sore displeasure against it self: It is apt to think, that this sure is the Gate of Hell; that it is forsaken of God; and shall either perish in this condition, or not escape out of it, without much loss. But after a while, when the work of God is done, and the vapours are vanished and disappear, it finds it self to be grown much in firmness, purity and splendor; and that it is made a Vessel of honour fit for the Masters use. There is no loss of any thing but of its self-will. Nothing is consumed but its softness and delicacy; which made it loth to be toucht.

The like may be said of many little passions and disorderly desires, to which our frail Natures are subject. If we can free our selves from one inordinate passion, which is a too vehement desire to be quite rid of them; it might bring us little less peace, than if we were: and our profiting would no less appear, in continuing still to do our duty, of which we complain that they are so great an hindrance. However, there is no reason for such conclusions as those, which good minds have been apt to make in a gloomy day; that if God loved them,

them, he would not treat them after that manner. There is rather great reason, considering what hath been said, to be not only patient, but thankful to him in such a condition. For it is not inconsistent with his care and infinite kindness, to let us be obnoxious to those changes, and those weaknesses too, which I have mentioned: but you see plainly it must be so; and therefore it is best to be well pleased with these Methods of our Heavenly Father, at least contented that it should be so.

And let me add this for a conclusion of this Discourse; that God may suffer some Persons to be thus overcast with darkness, and he may withhold his gracious influences from them, for the sins of their former life, before they were converted; which deserved he should never have afforded his grace unto them at all. What are we, should such Men say, that we should expect to live always under the light of his countenance? Alas! one age of darkness is too good for us; and we have reason to thank him, if we be not eternally banished from his sight. Why should such poor things as we think to receive every day some extraordinary tokens of his Divine favour; when one good look from him, is enough to oblige us as long as we live?

242 *Advice to a Friend.*

live? How much more reason have we to praise him, that all our days are not gloomy, that our Sun is not always eclipsed, or rather that our life is but one long Night; than to complain that a Cloud sometimes passes over us, or a Mist gathers about us? It is but fit that we should be hereby taught what it is to sin against God; and it is well for us that we were not sent to learn it in outer darkness. We are not ill dealt withal, if we can learn at so cheap a rate the value of pardoning mercy: but shall have cause in Heaven to praise God, that we paid no dearer for it. Is this all the punishment that is due for our many faults? Doth he not use us very kindly, if we be not quite cast out of his Presence? O what a joy will it be to us, to find that we are in his favour in the other World? And we may be content, if he please, to stay for our joy till that time; when we shall certainly know, whether we have reason to rejoice or no.

But I shall say no more of this to you, who have spent your time so innocently and vertuously, that there is reason you should reap the fruit of it now, in perpetual joy and satisfaction of heart, from the consideration of God's goodness to you. And I had wholly omitted this last Advice,
did

did not I know the weakness of humane Nature to be so great, that the best disposed Souls may sometimes feel such alterations in them, as may make it very necessary. In which case, if ever you should find your self, doubt not to approach to God, and say to him, with all humility of spirit, some such words as these.

A PRAYER.

I Acknowledge, O great God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, that I am not worthy of the least glimpse of thy divine favour. It is sufficient that I live and behold the light of the Sun, and am not banished into outer darkness. And it is more than enough, for so wretched a thing as I am, that thou art pleased, at any time of my life, to bestow upon me the smallest testimony of thy love. But that I live in hope to pass through all these Clouds, and to behold my blessed Saviour in inconceivable splendor, and rejoice with him for ever; O what a grace is it! How infinitely am I indebted to Thee, for such riches of mercy! It ought to make me contented with any condition here; and exceeding thankful to Thee, that it is no worse. Deal with me, O merciful God, even as thou pleasest,

244 Advice to a Friend.

sest, so that I may but have this humble hope preserved in my heart, of seeing and loving my Lord, not as now darkly and dully, but in the clearest light, and with the most ardent love, in Immortal Glory.

I submit to thy Infinite Wisdom under all that heaviness and listlessness of spirit, wherewith I am oppressed; from which I know thy Infinite Power, if thou didst judge it most convenient, is able to deliver me. Thou art not unwilling neither, I know, to gratifie the desires of pious hearts, who sincerely long after a state of more perfect love to Thee, and would gladly with more active and unwearyed spirits serve thee and all mankind. But since thou art pleased to leave us to contend with many and great infirmities of our mortal Nature, thy will be done. I deserved none of that power and strength from above, which I have received: O that I could say that I have always imployed it, or been so thankful for it, as I ought! By thy grace I am what I am. And by its assistance I hope to persevere in my duty, and in thy love; though thou deniest me all the satisfaction, which I am inclined to desire. I am content to serve thee on any terms; yea desirous to have my will subdued, in every thing, perfectly unto thine.

O that I may but feel my Soul growing more humble, more submissive, more patient,
more

more intirely resigned to thy pleasure; and I shall think my self a great gainer, by all the loads and pressures under which I groan. O that they may depress me more in my own thoughts; and make me more admire thy indulgent kindness which exercises no greater severity upon me; and raise in me an higher esteem of those favours, which thou art pleased at any time to communicate to me; and make me place my satisfaction, in a constant and resolute obedience to Thee (whatsoever discouragements I meet withal) and in the expectation of an happy translation from this earthly state to an Heavenly, which thou hast promised as the reward of faithful obedience.

Into thy hand, O Lord, I now commend my Spirit, as I must do when I leave this World. I trust my self with Thee; beseeching thee to conduct me safe through all the various changes of this life, both bodily and spiritual, unto thy eternal rest. And for that end, bestow upon me such an attentive and sincerely discerning spirit, that I may never be cheated by the laziness of fleshly Nature; nor call that my infirmity, which is my carelesness and negligence. Preserve me from all affected Ignorance, from idleness, from rashness, from self-flattery and presumption: as well as from all causeless jealousies of my self, and too much sadness
and

246 Advice to a Friend.

and dejection of spirit. Help me to overcome daily the unsteadiness of my mind and thoughts, and that backwardness which is in my will and affections; together with all other imperfections and weaknesses of this state. But as for all the lusts of the flesh, and the lusts of the eye, or the pride of life, O my God, I hope I shall be a perfect stranger to them, and far removed from them.

Help me in all conditions steadfastly to love the good which thou hast commanded, and the good which thou hast promised: And enable me as patiently to bear the evil which thou inflictdest, and as vehemently to hate the evil which thou forbiddest, and to be much afraid of the evil which thou threatnest, and to be well pleased with every thing that thou sendest. If thou makest me rich, keep me from being wanton, or proud, or in love with this World, or loth to leave it: Help me discreetly to taste of these good things, but to live upon those which are Heavenly. And if thou art pleased to reduce me into want, keep me from all repining thoughts, from distrust of Thee, and from too great carefulness and solicitude of mind: and help me then to remember that I have still the same most loving Father, who fed me in the days of my fullness and prosperity. While I have my health, good Lord, make me serviceable; that

that if I be sick, I may not be disconsolate, nor uneasie to my self and others. In all my employments dispose me to be chearful, in all my enjoyments thankful, and on all occasions very watchful, that I fall not into temptation: And be thou my Guide, my Helper, my Defender, my Comforter, and indulgent Father also, that if I do fall, I may not utterly be cast down; but live in hope to recover more strength, and to Glorifie Thee by bringing forth much and better Fruit, through Christ Jesus our blessed Saviour. By whom I believe in Thee who hast raised Him from the Dead, 1 Pet. i. 21. and given Him Glory, that our Faith and Hope might be in Thee our GOD. *Amen.*

THUS, *My Friend*, I have finished this little *Labour of Love* (to speak in the Language of St. Paul, 1 Thess. i. 3.) which I wish may prove so serviceable to you, that it may do more than produce that *Patience of Hope* in you, which he mentions in the same place. I would have you to be filled with the joy of hope, or, as he speaks in another Epistle, (XV. Rom. 13.) *with all joy and peace in believing.* It becomes ones of your understanding and goodness:

248 *Advice to a Friend.*

goodness: nor is there any greater effect of true Wisdom (as *Seneca* hath observed) than the equality and evenness of our joy. Nothing sure can hinder it in you, but the inequality perhaps at some times of your bodily temper, which is not to be avoided. But in that case I have instructed you what to do; and I am sure you will not fail to follow my Directions therein, and in all the rest, whatsoever pains it cost you. For I need not send you to *Musonius* to learn this great truth (of which you are as sensible as it is encouraging) that if a *Man* do any good thing with labour, the labour passes soon away, but the good remains: and if he do any evil with pleasure, the pleasure presently flies away, but the evil remains. So great is the difference between doing well, and doing ill, that you can never, I know, be tempted from the one unto the other. It is too late now to put a cheat upon you. The pleasures of sin cannot deceive one, whose senses are so well exercised to discern between good and evil. You may be abused, it is possible, with fears and jealousies of your self; and be cast down when you have no list to do any thing that is good, or when you mistake, or have committed a little fault: but as I said in the beginning, so I conclude,

conclude, be sure you hold fast an unmoveable belief of the goodness of GOD to you; which will defend you from the danger of those assaults, and prevent all the mischief which otherwise they might do you.

He doth not expect Children without all faults; and you may be sure cannot be unwilling to pardon them, when he knows that's the way to encourage them to grow better. There is no reason to suspect his sincerity, when he tells us, that he desires not the Death of a Sinner: Or to imagine that he secretly undermines us, while he openly professes love and friendship to us: or to fear that he intends to make us the Trophies of his meer Power and Greatness; or to draw us after Him, as his Captives, in any other Chariot than that of his Omnipotent Goodness, in which he rides all the World over. Believe this, and it will never let you despond in the worst condition; nor suffer you to be jealous of any of his commands, or fancy that he will lay impossible tasks upon you. And you will have as little cause to be suspicious of his Providence, or to take too heavily any thing that he doth: but will still believe, notwithstanding any objections or contrary appearances, that all things shall work together for your good. And whatsoever there
is

is that might dishearten you, this will make you persist in a resolute perswasion that GOD is willing and desirous to receive your Petitions, and will grant a gracious Answer. He cannot envy his blessings to any: nor loves he to suppress his kindness within himself. For envy proceeds from weakness and from want, which incline a Person to seek how he may ingross every thing, and appropriate it to his own particular being. But he who in his own Nature is so perfect that he can want nothing is inclined no doubt to let others participate with him in his happiness, since he will still remain as full as he was.

You think it is impossible (as *Proclus* well says) that darkness should approach the Sun, who is the Parent of Light: But it is more impossible that any envy should touch God, whose Nature is so excellent, that he hath given to all what they have. What is there left for him to envy, who hath already all that can be? For, what Want can there be in infinite Fulness? What Weakness and Infirmary in the Omnipotent Deity? Who is there that can share and go halves with the Fountain of all Good? Let Us not therefore look upon GOD, as if we thought Him afraid that we should be too

Φωὸς καὶ
ὕψος

Advice to a Friend. · 251

too good, or enjoy too much good : or as if He were unwilling we should be exceeding happy. For He is such a Good, that he hath filled and replenished all things; and doth good, and bestows Benefits continually upon them all. And why should you think your self excluded out of the vast compass of his Love ; or imagine after He hath done so much for you, that his Bounty is exhausted? Do you not feel what kindness GOD hath implanted in our hearts, towards each other? How free, how diligent, how unwearied a Friend is in serving a Person whom he loves intirely? And what is there better natur'd than that Religion which Christ hath taught Us ; the top of which is Love and Charity ; and that is both a Bountiful, and a Meek, and a Patient Vertue? For it *suffers long and is kind*, so St Paul begins its Character ; *it bears all things, and endures all things*, so he ends it. And is it possible, do you think, that GOD should give Us that, which is not in Himself? Or that He should command Us to accomplish our Souls with that Perfection, which is not eminent in his own most excellent Nature? We are sure that our loving kindness is but a weak imitation of His. And therefore may conclude that He will have Patience with Us and not be easily

252 *Advice to a Friend.*

sily provoked ; but bear with our infirmities, and be exceeding kind in bestowing his Blessings; and pardoning our Offences, and delight in doing both ; because there is nothing He so much delights to see in Us, as this image of His loving kindness. So the greatest Men in the Church of *C H R I S T* have resolved,

“ Some empty their Bags, (saith *Gregory Nazianzen*) others mace-
Orat. 7. “ rate their Flesh; and there are
 “ those who quite abandon the
 “ World, and retire out of it; and some
 “ who have consecrated their dearest
 “ pledges to *G O D*. But thou needest do
 “ none of these; there is one thing thou
 “ mayest bring and offer to Him in stead of
 “ all, and that is loving kindness, (for-
 “ giving of Injuries, and doing Benefits)
 “ *in which God rejoyces more than in all the*
 “ *rest put together.* A proper Gift; an un-
 “ spotted Gift; a Gift that provokes the
 “ Divine Bounty to be still more liberal
 “ in His Favours to Us.

For, it is impossible that He should be out-done by Us, or that we should equal Him in tenderness and compassion: of which he hath given Us such a surprising and glorious instance in the Son of his love *Christ Jesus*; that we should be very unjust

Advice to a Friend. 253

as well as ungrateful and unkind, if we should not expect more from him, than we would do from the best Friend in the World. We see in our Lord what the Divine Love will incline Him to do: We are satisfied beyond all reasonable cause of distrust how propitious and gracious He is: So that you ought to be confident, whatsoever defects you find in your self, that *He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the Day of CHRIST JESUS.* It is but handsome and becoming that you should have this Opinion of Him. Judge by your self and your own good inclinations, whether you ought not to have such high thoughts of Infinite Love. You owe to Him all the good you have: and there is more Reason, as I told you, that He should perfect his own work, than there was that He should begin it. And therefore let your Eyes be ever towards the Lord. Commit your Self to Him, in assured hope of His continued Love to you. Beseech him to *fulfill in you all the good pleasure of his goodness*; and that, according to the trust you have reposed in Him, He *would keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding joy.*

I cannot tell you how oft I have said

A M E N

254 *Advice to a Friend.*

AMEN to this; nor how much I am inclined to continue this Discourse further than I have designed: For *Wisdom it self* (as the same *Gregory Nazianzen* hath observed) *which gives measures to all things else, sets none to Friendship;* which ought to know no bounds, Orat. 12. nor be confined within any limits. But I shall contain my self within the compass which I prescribed my self at first; and add no more, unless it be that Prayer of R. *Eliezar*, with which he is said to have concluded Daily all his other Prayers.

Let it be thy good pleasure, O Lord, that Love and Brotherly kindness may dwell in our lot.

For why should I prolong this Letter, in making any needless declarations, how much I am, where, or howsoever our lot falls,

Yours in Love unfeigned,

S. P.

THE END.

